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Maps and Tips:
Hudson Soft's *Adventure Island, Part II*

▼

Sega's *Shinobi*

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SEE PAGE 91 FOR DETAILS

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Christmas Computer-Game Preview

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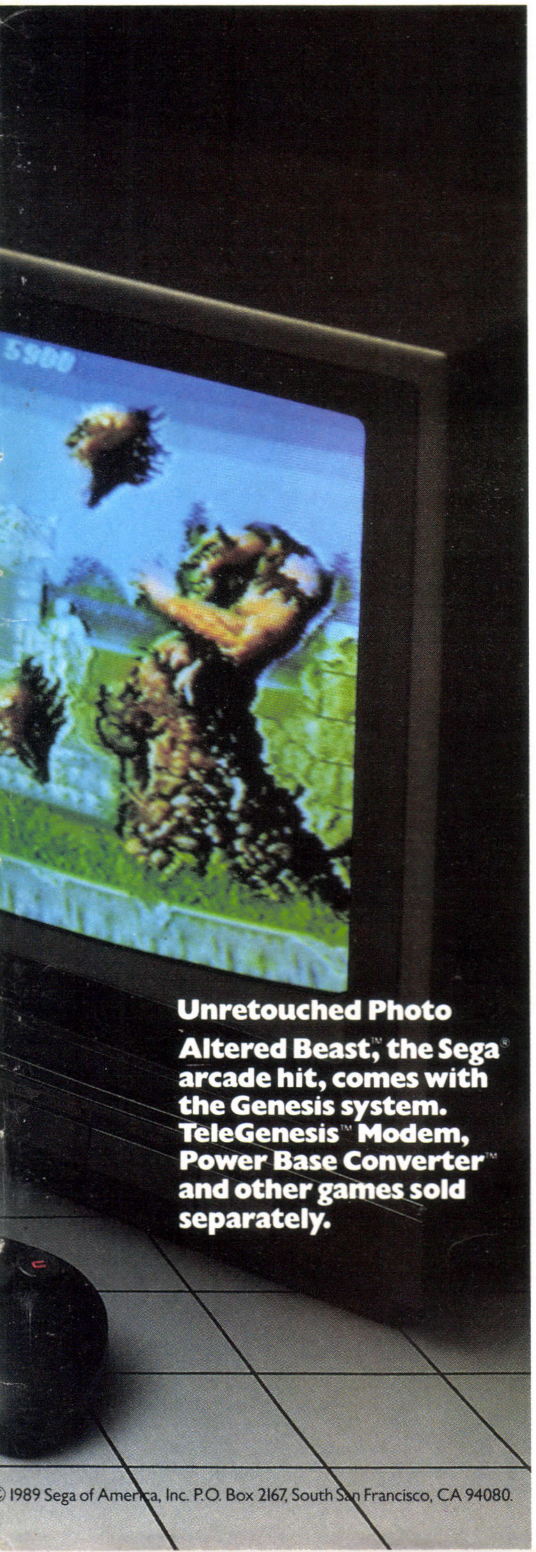

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Altered Beast,™ the Sega® arcade hit, comes with the Genesis system. TeleGenesis™ Modem, Power Base Converter™ and other games sold separately.

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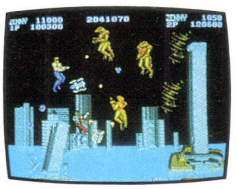

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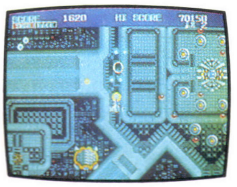

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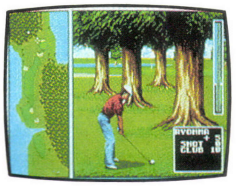

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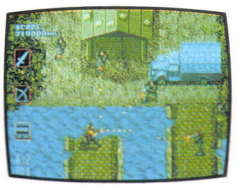

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OCTOBER ▼ 1989

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Flex your joystick muscles with our resident expert on *The Honeymooners, Indiana Jones in the Temple of Doom* and *Road Runner.*

Cover: The Lynx, Atari's new portable color game machine, is a handful of video-game excitement. [Lynx not shown actual size.]

Photography by Ladi von Jansky.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As I write this, I'm supposed to be vacationing, but instead I'm spending a few minutes in front of a laptop computer. It's gotten to the point that most of my family—and any people I "vacation" with—are now used to the fact that I mix business with pleasure. When I have a burning idea for an article, I don't like to let it sit. 'Nuff said.

The catalyst for this editorial is the location I'm writing from. It happens that I'm typing this in Silicon Valley, California, the heart of computer and video-game happenings in the U.S. The towns that I've driven through these last few days are all familiar to veteran electronic gamers: Sunnyvale, San Jose, Cupertino, Mountain View. . . the list goes on. Along each road are company names that find their way onto page after page of VG&CE. Over the years, many companies have thrived, and others have fallen by the wayside to make way for new entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs. That word spurs memories of Jobs and Wozniak creating the first Apple computer in a garage for a few hundred bucks; Nolan Bushnell paving the way for Atari's beginnings with a revolutionary game called *Pong*; Activision making its start with the visions of a few ex-Atari employees. All of these events, and more, took place in this small chunk of Northern California.

Unfortunately, times have changed. Now that these companies are "big business," lawyers are as important to their success as the programmers and hardware designers. And with the lawyers comes a tactic that can be used to halt another companies' progress: lawsuits. Sure, in many cases there are times when a company has been wronged and a suit is justified. There are other times, and these seem to be increasing, when the size of a company—and, therefore, its pack of lawyers—is overwhelming for a smaller business who is trying to bring out new ideas. It gets to the point that fighting a court battle can take all of a company's time and money.

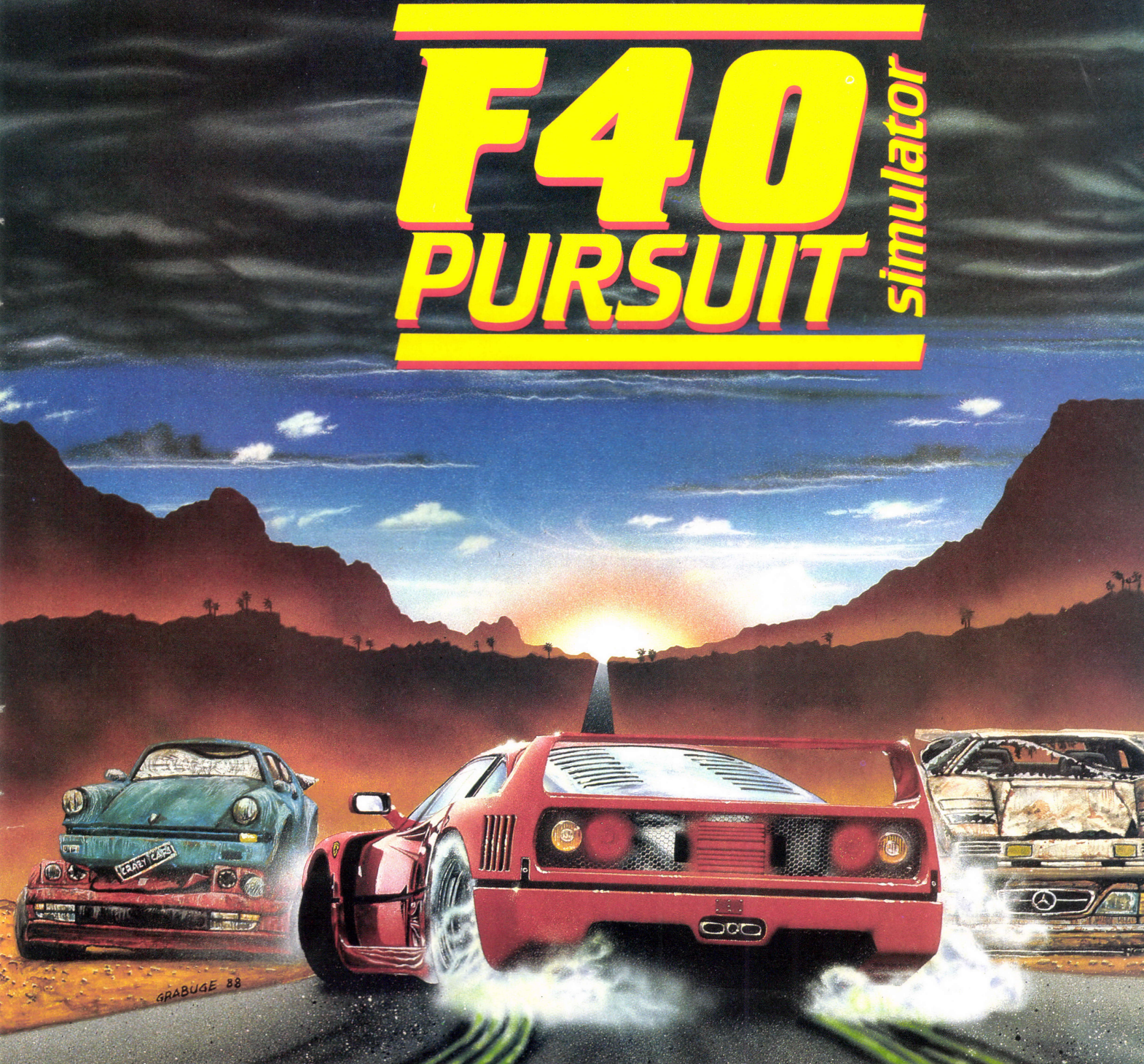
That's what sticks in my mind now when I talk to a company like Color Dreams or Tengen. These guys know they have a tough road ahead and that they may well get sued, but they're willing to fight for something they believe in, even though it may drive them to their financial knees. It's the spirit that they have a *chance* to succeed that drives them on. That's the admirable side of these battles.

Keep in mind that I may be shooting off my mouth—well, pen—in ignorance, because I have no training in law. It still irritates me to see a large, successful company like Nintendo repeatedly suing Tengen at every turn of the corner. Finding a loophole or clause that enables you to take out a company's legs may be business in the '80s, but that doesn't make it right in my view. I'd like to see companies go head to head strictly on abilities—may the best man win.

The drive through Silicon Valley is truly beautiful, with its rolling hills and spacious countryside. But perhaps it's too idyllic a thought to wish for a return to its entrepreneurial roots. It's disturbing for me to think that the lawyers are getting bigger offices than the programmers.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

F40 PURSUIT simulator



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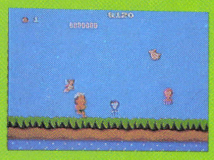
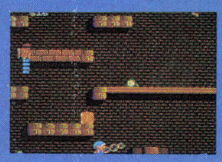


Milon's Secret Castle

In pre-historic times, where ancient dinosaur creatures ruled, the adventures of Dino-Riki began. A courageous young man, Dino-Riki is determined to establish mankind's future in this violent age. Dino-Riki must fight his way through lotus swamps, dark caverns, deep canyons, deserts and giant dinosaur bosses.



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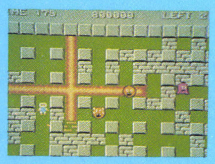

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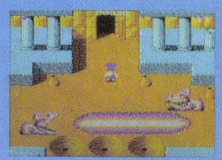

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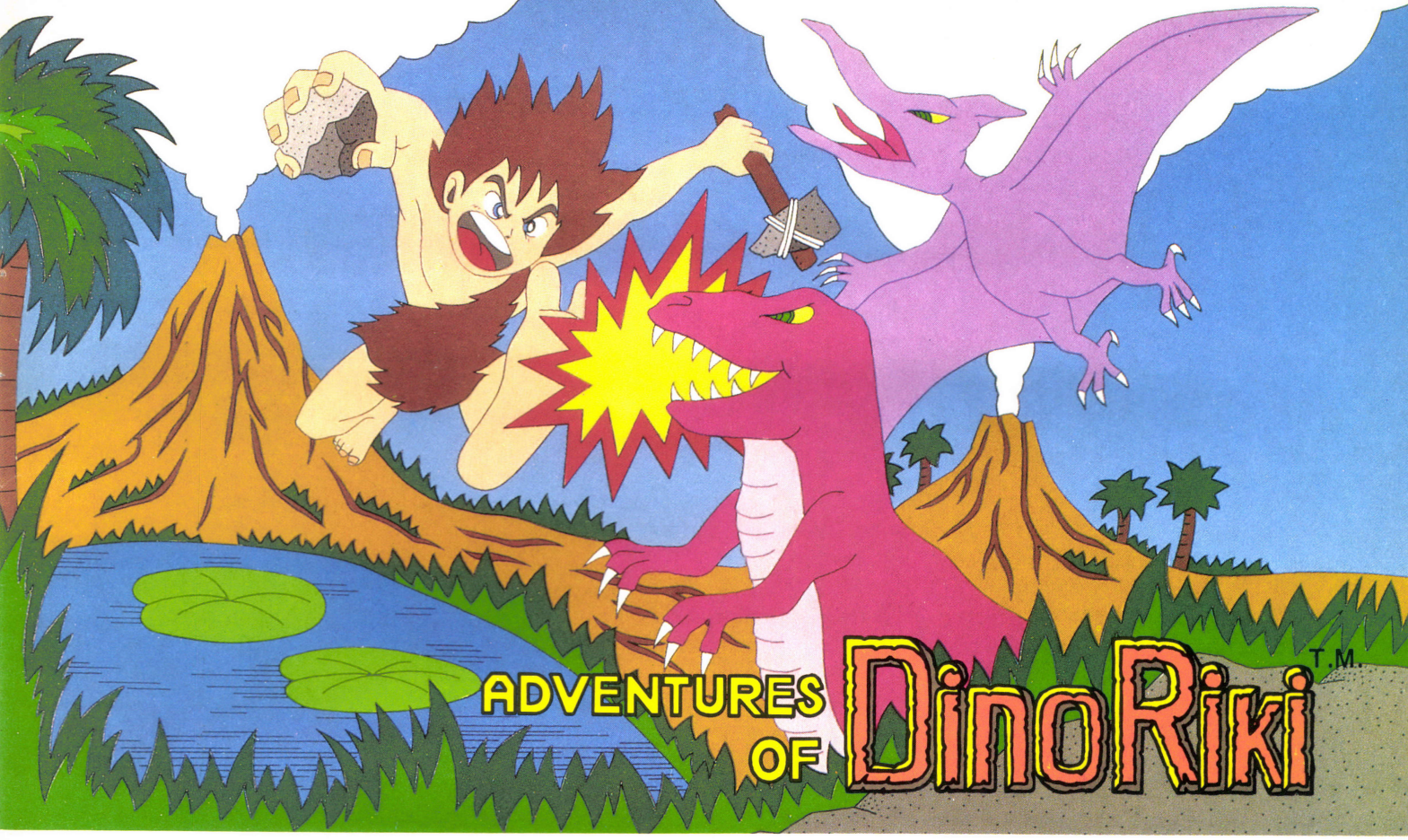

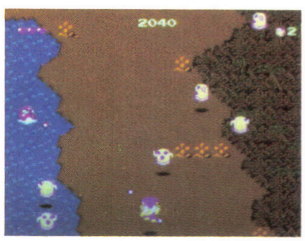

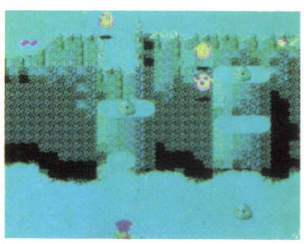

The adventures of Dino-Riki began in pre-historic times when ancient dinosaurs ruled the earth. Dino-Riki is determined to establish mankind's future in this violent age by exploring and fighting his way through deserts filled with quicksand, sinking lotus swamps, dark caverns and deep canyons. In his quest, Dino-Riki is armed with a shooting weapon that will change and progress from rocks to axes, to boomerangs and to fiery torches. There are many hidden items that will help Dino-Riki to increase his strength, extend his life, fly like an eagle and one that will change Dino-Riki to "Macho-Riki", the ancient warrior, etc... Dino-Riki will need all the ancient knowledge and items he can find before facing the dinosaur bosses: Tyrannosaurus, Pteranodon, Monster Fly and Giant Cobra.

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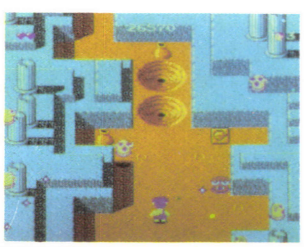

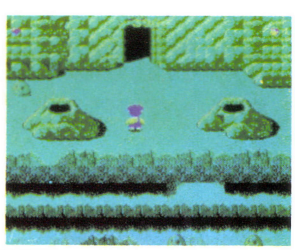

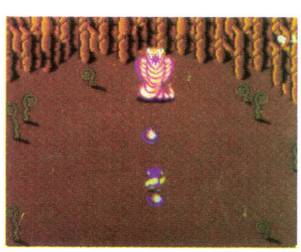

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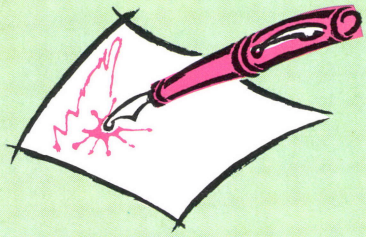

A CAUTIOUS BUYER

Dear VG&CE:

I love your magazine and the video-game business. Before I start, I want to make it clear that I own Nintendo, Sega and Atari video-game systems, so at this point I am partial to no one.

I've got some gripes: I am tired of reading over and over how "great" some games and peripherals are that, in my opinion, are awful. Specifically, the *Ghostbusters* game is completely unplayable and frustrating for me, so I sold my NES cartridge. The same goes for *Rampage*. There is so much hype over this game. It has a continue feature so you never have to "die," and in a little over three hours I was able to get to the end.

I have bought countless joysticks that I have returned to the store for a refund, all made by third-party hardware developers, that either didn't function as promised, were poorly made or were just too awkward to use.

I'm also going to be *very* selective about any future cartridges I buy this year (and beyond) for the NES and Sega—I'm really burned by the $44.95-and-up price tag on new games. It's just getting too expensive.

I don't like what I see happening out there, and there must be others who feel as I do. In the meantime, I'm going to continue to enjoy to the max the carts I have.

—Barbara J. Major
Tacoma, Washington

P.S.—I also take great exception to the recent review of *Mickey Mousecapade* by Christie Hewlett in your June issue. This is an excellent cart for novice gamers to start with. It gives you just enough of a challenge while leaving your confidence intact, and it has that element lacking in so many of the "sophisticated" games—*fun*. It doesn't bother me that it isn't the most difficult game out there. Even though it is one that I have completed, I am keeping it in my game library.

Your gripes about product quality certainly are valid; in any industry, you'll find sub-par and above-average products being released to the buying public. As far as our reviews go, they are simply one person's opinion. In the same sense as movie and restaurant reviews, there will be varying feelings about a specific product—depending on a person's tastes—and we don't try to pretend that VG&CE *reviews are the* only *correct assessment. The best way to judge whether you like a product or not is to try it, but our reviews will give you a feel for the content of the product and quality from a visual standpoint.*

I also agree that video gaming is becoming quite an expensive hobby. In all fairness, you have to take into account how the quality of these games has increased over the years—particularly in comparison to the now-ancient Atari 2600. Looking at the TurboGrafx-16 and Genesis as an evolution of the 2600, you'll see why these devices have increased in price. Games now require teams *of programmers, artists and musicians to create, whereas a 2600 game would often be constructed by a single author. Naturally the costs are passed on to the consumer.*

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!

Dear VG&CE:

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—Dan Panke
President, ST-PLUG

Thanks for your gracious offer, Dan.

BITING INTO MACINTOSH

Dear VG&CE:

I own an NES, but I also own a Macintosh SE/30 system. I love both of them. I also love your magazine and think it's the best.

You already have articles for Apple, IBM, Atari, Amiga and Commodore, but do you think you could devote a little more space to the Macintosh?

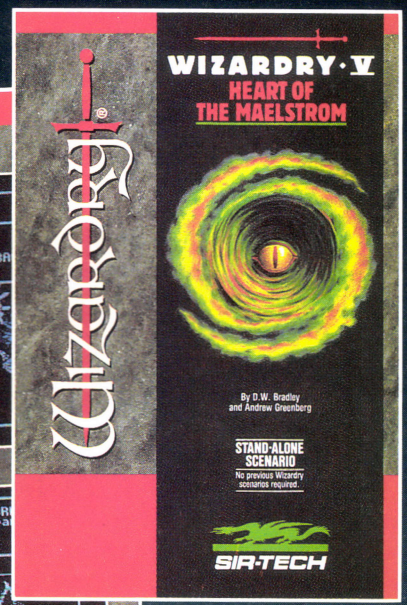
—Matt Miller
Ventura, California

Thanks for the kind words, Matt. We'd be happy to print more articles and reviews for the Mac, but, unfortunately, the Mac isn't as well supported by game manufacturers as other computers are. Though this trend seems to be reversing somewhat, I think you'll find most game development taking place for the IBM PC and Commodore 64 first. After those brands are addressed—as this is what most of the computer gamers own—Atari, Amiga, Apple and Mac are considered.

When a larger share of games are developed for the Mac, you'll undoubtedly see more reviews in VG&CE *with "Macin-*

WIZARDRY·V

HEART OF THE MAELSTROM



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But now, the Sages have discovered that the hidden reason is deeper and more frightening than the worst of these disasters. To save the very world as we know it, you, and your intrepid party must rush headlong into the ...

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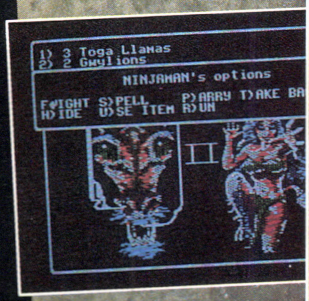
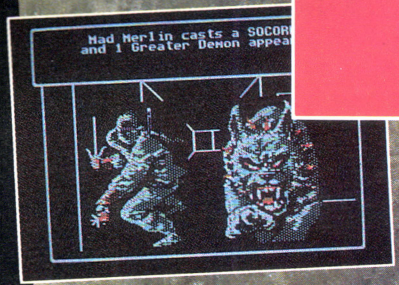
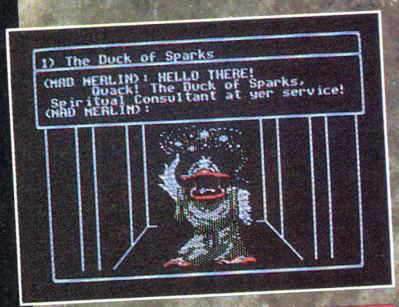
Converse, buy, sell, trade, steal, or stand and fight in a dungeon filled with real characters.

For the most exciting experience available in fantasy role-playing, enter Heart of the Maelstrom!







Screens from Apple II version of the game. Screens for other systems may vary.

Now available for:

- Apple II Series (5¼ inch only)
- MS-DOS machines (3½ inch and 5¼ inch)

STAND-ALONE SCENARIO

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Wizardry

PLAY IT TO THE HILT!

SIR-TECH

Sir-tech Software, Inc.
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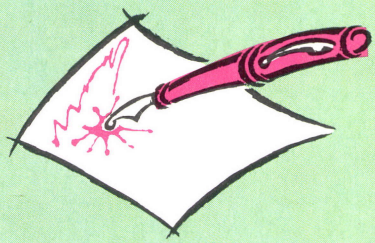
CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

READER MAIL



tosh'' in the version list.

PAT ON THE BACK

Dear VG&CE:

I commend you on your magazine's remarkable depth. Instead of the usual low-class magazines that concentrate on video games, yours is the first to really go under the packaging to provide interesting, informative articles. The *Inside Gaming* section is especially outstanding. Your experience in the field makes you the best—I really mean it. Keep up the good work.

—Daryel Bush
Nashville, Tennessee

Thanks for sticking with VG&CE, *Daryel. We're glad you enjoy it.*

We try to mix computer and video-game coverage to give our readers all the information that they need to make good buying decisions. The Inside Gaming *column and the monthly interview also help to show some of the behind-the-scenes of the game-development process. Considering that the majority of our readership own both a computer and a video-game console, we feel that the* VG&CE *package is the only place to turn for quality information.*

REMEMBER COLECOVISION?

Dear VG&CE:

Here is our money order for a subscription to your great magazine. We are very happy to see a magazine about video games again—it's made our day! My son has a Nintendo, so we will be looking forward to information on NES games.

I do have a question that I hope you can help me with: Is there anyplace that I can get my Colecovision fixed? With over 50 cartridges and all the add-ons that they came out with, I'd hate to just forget about it. I wrote a letter to Coleco but it came back.

Thank you and keep up the great job.

—John Clark
Montpelier, Indiana

We're glad that VG&CE *is what you are looking for, John.*

We made a few phone calls and found out some interesting info on the Colecovision system: Coleco still has a bunch of authorized Colecovision service centers around the country. To find the one nearest you, just give a call to their customer service department at (518) 773-3040. We hope that solves your problem.

GOOD JOB, BUT. . .

Dear VG&CE:

My compliments on two well-done issues (June and July 1989). Another interesting thing was that you got the July issue to me rather early. How do you guys do that?

On the June issue, those were great photos on the cover and in the RoboCop article. Send my compliments to Ladi von Jansky. Also, thanks for the info on the TurboGrafx-16, and I enjoyed the interview with Don Mattrick.

I would like to point out two mistakes, though. In your May 1989 issue, on page 20, under the second photo, I think that is supposed to be *Street Fighter*, not *Fighting Street*. And in the July 1989 issue, in your *Reader Mail*'s second letter, the writer points out that the Tengen cartridge fits "in your NEC machine." I believe that should be NES. Thanks.

—Dale Scheihagen
Dallas, Texas

To answer your first question: Subscribers should receive their issues in the middle of the month before the cover date, and the magazine goes on sale at newsstands around the 25th.

Thanks for your comments and compliments, Dale. We pride ourselves on the fact that we use some of the most talented photographers in the world.

As far as the mistakes you brought to our attention: We plead guilty on one of them. Indeed, it was the VG&CE *editors, not B.J. Major (who seems to be a frequent* Reader Mail *contributor), who mixed up NEC with NES. Of course, at that time, we had "NEC on the brain" because of our TurboGrafx-16 coverage. Ms. Major meant that the Tengen cartridges fit in the Nintendo Entertainment System or NES.*

As you can see in the accompanying picture, the game that we know as Street Fighter *in America is called* Fighting Street *in Japan. The Japanese system was the source of many of the preliminary PC Engine/TurboGrafx-16 pictures we printed. When the catalog of Japanese games comes here, you might see some name changes similar to this one.*

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, *9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.*

THUNDERCADE™

Terrorism has reached new heights. AATOM (Atomic Age Terrorist Organization of Miracali) has constructed its own nuclear power plant, and threatens the world with atomic terror.

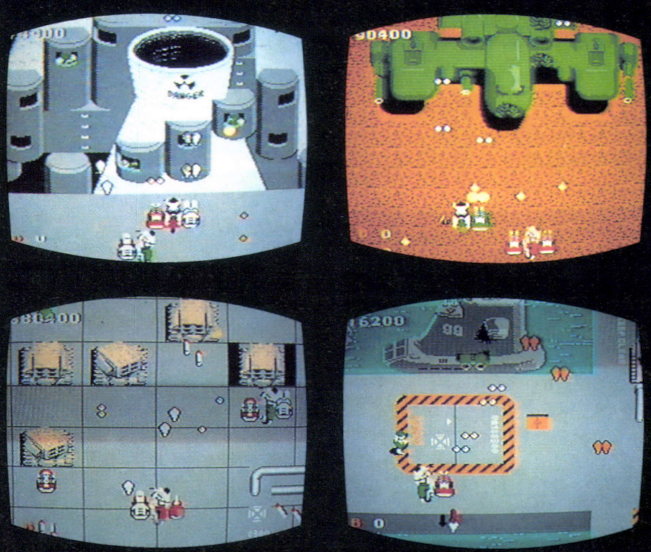
The world powers have decided to initiate operation THUNDERCADE to stop AATOM. Equipped with a high-performance combat motorcycle, sidecar cannons, and backed by a precision B-7 bomber, you set out on your dangerous mission.

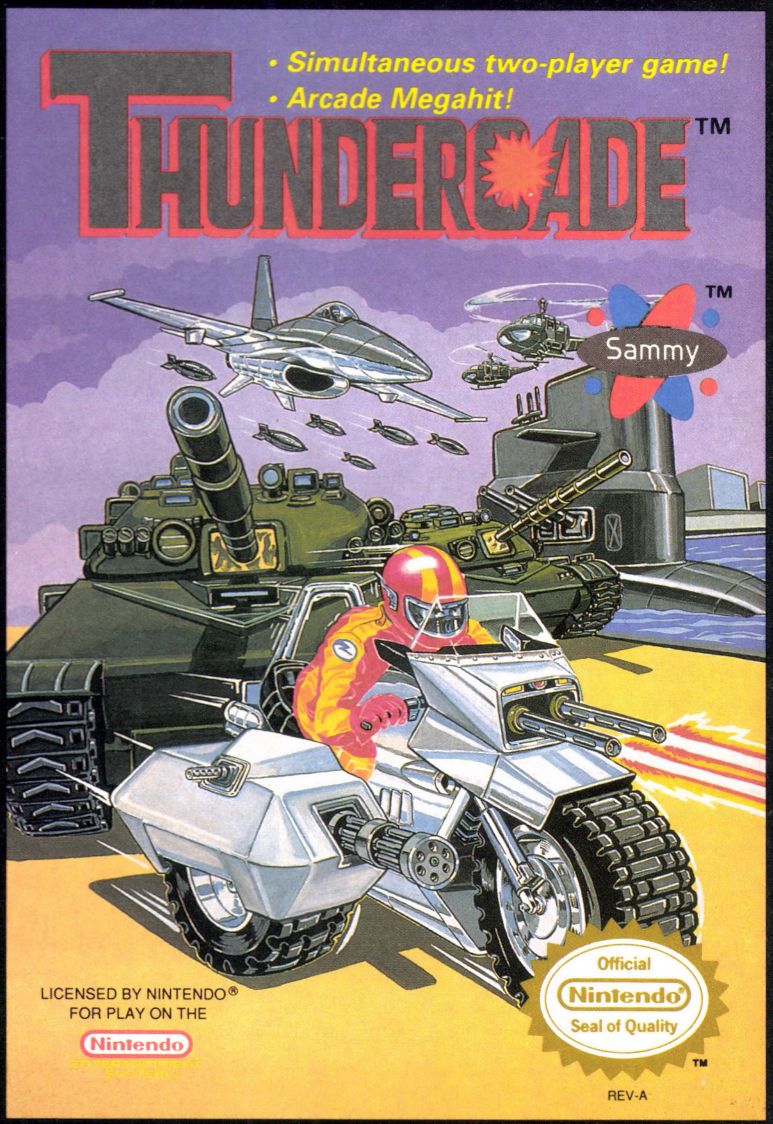
Start in the city streets and continue through bases, woodlands and the fortress before reaching the heavily guarded nuclear power plant.

With a hit-miss ratio display at the end of each stage, you can improve your attack efficiency.

Have a friend join in and save the world together!

Go for the challenge!!!





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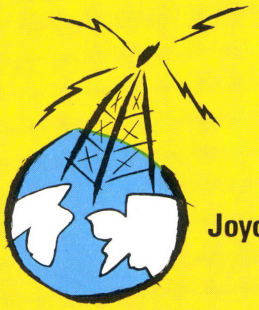
NEWS BITS



Compiled by Joyce Worley

The Wages of Sin

Software pirates around the world are finding that stealing computer games carries its own form of punishment. *Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards* has turned up in a virus-infected illegal edition in many countries, including England, Switzerland and Germany.

Sierra's legal edition of the game is, of course, free of any virus, but pirated copies have bitten the hands of those who stole them. Some bank systems in the U.K. were casualties of the infected stolen software, but the biggest mess occurred in the Netherlands. Some civil servants put the pirated version into the government's computer system and, when the virus activated, wiped out the entire financial administration.

A Sharp Way to Play Video Games

A combination 19-inch television set and Nintendo-compatible video-game console will be available in the United States by spring 1990. Sharp Electronic plans to sell the unit for approximately $800.

Sharp is the only company authorized to manufacture a Nintendo-compatible console in Japan. It hopes to secure a similar arrangement for the United States so that its forthcoming video-game TV will accept Nintendo cartridges.

Computer Game Sales Hit $262.6 Million

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) reports that Americans spent $262.6 million on home-computer entertainment software in 1988. That is a 28.5% increase over 1987's total of $204.4 million.

MS-DOS represents the biggest slice of the game market ($123.8 million), followed by the Commodore 64, Apple II and Macintosh. Sales of MS-DOS-compatible computer games rose almost 60% for the year, according to the SPA.

Vette! Contest Gives San Francisco Treat

Five lucky buyers of *Vette!* (Spectrum Holobyte) will get all-expenses-paid trips for two to San Francisco in Spectrum Holobyte's sweepstakes. Designed to promote its new urban racing simulation, the contest is a series of five random drawings from the registration/warranty cards returned for *Vette!* The sweepstakes closes December 29.

Each winner in the "Drive a Vette Through the Streets of San Francisco" sweepstakes receives air fare for two from anywhere in the U.S., hotel accommodations for three nights, the use of a Corvette for the four-day weekend and $2,000 cash spending money.

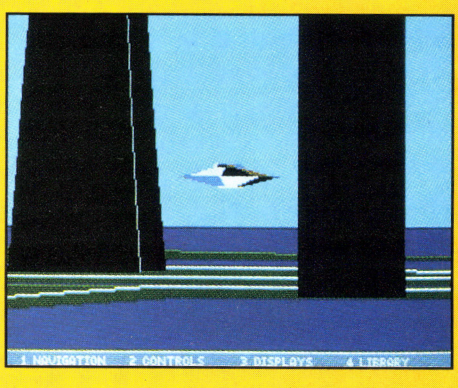
Complete rules are found in packages of *Vette!*, which is available for IBM PC, Amiga and Macintosh computers. It allows the armchair racer to drive any of four Corvette models up and down the scenic hills of San Francisco.

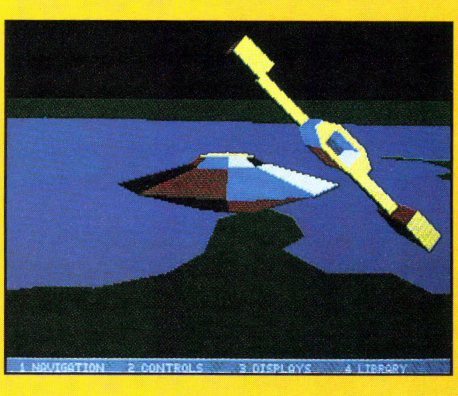
UFO Spotted Over Illinois

Proof now exists that UFOs are real. Seen first in the skies over Champaign, Illinois, the unidentified flying objects have now been identified as high-performance spacecraft.

The latest twist on computerized flying craft is an out-of-this-world simulation created by Bruce (*Flight Simulator*) Artwick, of subLogic Corp. The unique one-man (or one-alien) ship, capable of aerodynamic and quantum flight, comes with a stealthy mission: harvest Earth's fuel, to be traded for supplies back at the mothership. The unarmed UFO must stay undetected by humans to continue grabbing the goods.

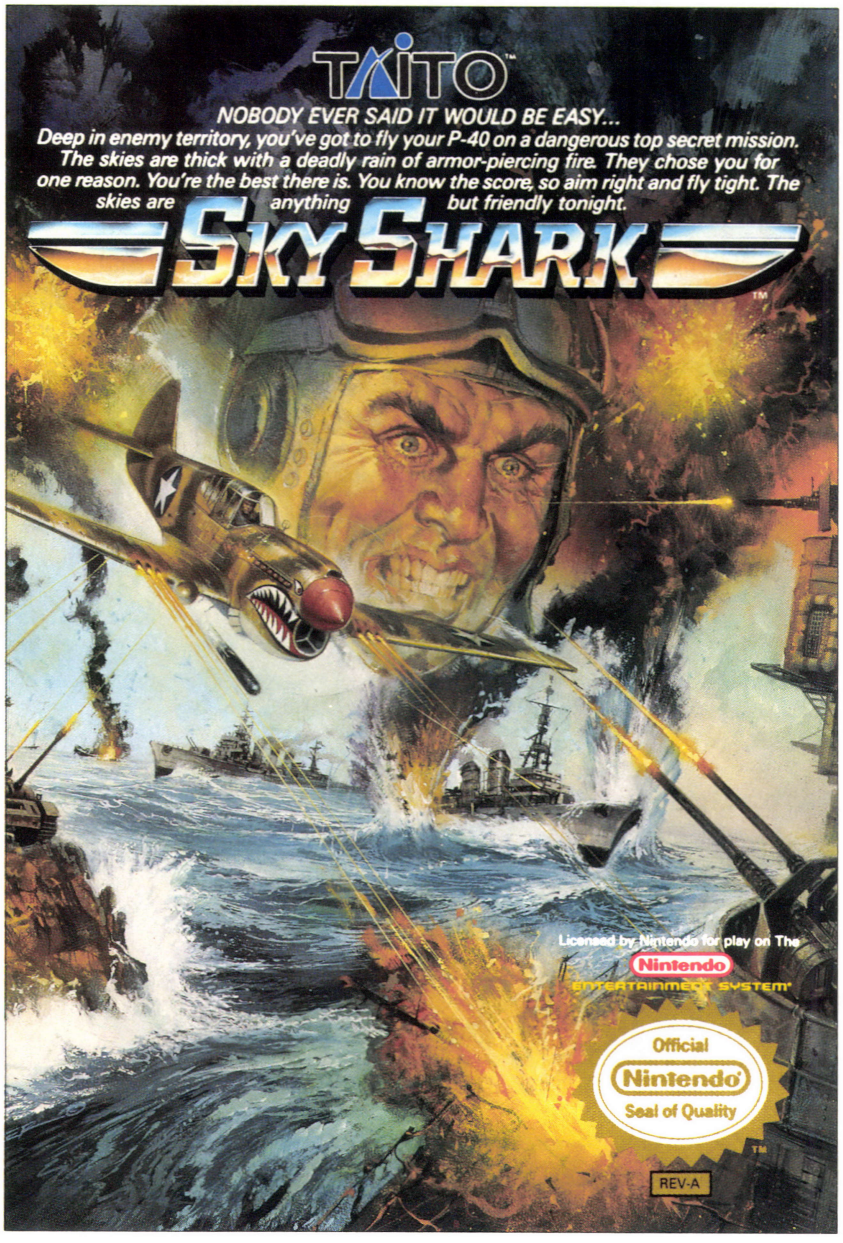
UFO, initially for IBM PC computers, is stuffed with high-tech gadgetry to keep the pilot busy, including anti-gravity propulsion that permits UFO-style hovering, a gluton drive to boost the ship into orbit, equipment to control the aerodynamics of the ship and thrusters for landing and space docking. A tractor beam is used to dock with the mothership (or to capture human aircraft), and the ship can be made invisible during low-level flight. *UFO* features new experimental graphics and special effects and also interfaces with subLogic's *Scenery Disks*.





STRAP IN FOR FULL THROTTLE ACTION.

SKY SHARK® FOR YOUR NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM.®



The Original Arcade Hit Is Here Now!

Get ready for the flight of your life with the awesome WW II air battle, Sky Shark.® Pilot your P-40 fighter plane over a scrolling landscape of dangerous enemy territory. Use your machine guns, bombs and pilot skills to knock out attacking tanks, anti-aircraft guns and an armada of deadly battleships and aircraft carriers. The final fight brings you face to face with a massive flying fortress.

Now this white knuckle arcade thriller from Taito® is ready to fly on your Nintendo Entertainment System.® You won't believe the five incredible levels of action.

We bring even more arcade excitement into your home with other action packed hits like Bubble Bobble,™ the addictive dinosaur romp, Operation Wolf,® the awesome prisoner rescue mission, and Renegade,™ the knock-out street-style karate brawl.

Take off for the guts and glory of taming the skies with the high flying action of Sky Shark.® Don't be left on the ground.

TAITO™
THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN.™

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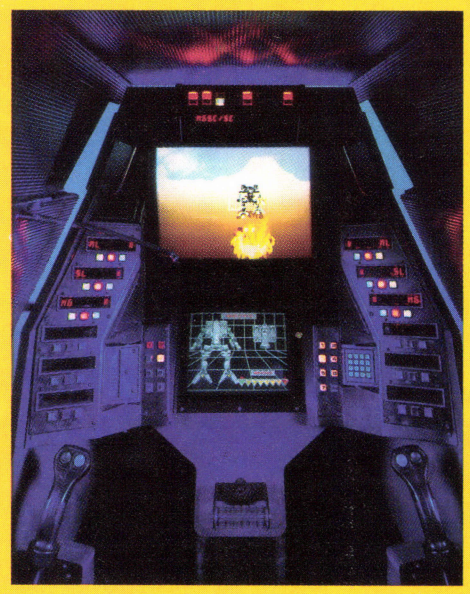
CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

BattleTech Centers Planned

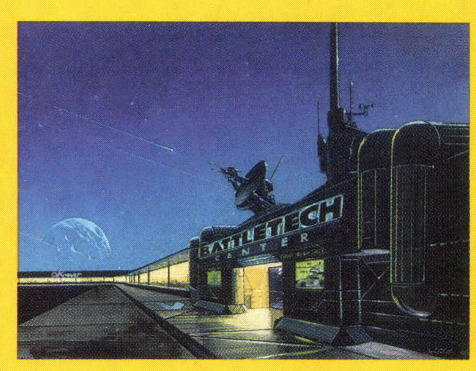
ESP Corporation, a Chicago-based company incorporated by the shareholders of FASA in 1987, is planning for 150 *BattleTech Centers* across the U.S. and Canada. The first computer-entertainment gaming parlor will open in Chicago in late 1989. Other locations have not yet been named.

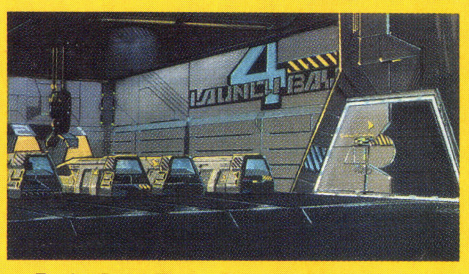
BattleTech Center is an environmental complex simulating a fictional universe. Eight players, each in an enclosed cockpit, compete or cooperate in the starbase-style action. Each console has three computers with 32 megabytes on board, networked with the other pits in play and connected by radio for inter-pilot communications. The player constantly sees the other gamers' vehicles and movements, as well as the surrounding terrain.

The *BattleTech Center* gaming experience is heightened by its surroundings. The lobby area is decorated as a starship's wardroom. TV monitors broadcast futuristic newscasts, instructions to players and views of games in progress. The player next advances into the Combat Information Center and Embarkation Hall, where up to a dozen video monitors continue the broadcast information bombardment. A uniformed "officer" gives players their orders. Then the two four-player teams are encouraged to confer about strategies or research information about the universe on the computer.



Players next move into the Launch Area and approach their cockpits on catwalks. Inside each vehicle, a 25-inch color monitor forms the front window. A secondary screen displays the radar and vehicle damage. Other features include weapon-selection displays, throttle control, directional pedals, a ceiling message center, an engine-instrumentation panel and a damage-control computer.





Each *BattleTech Center* will cost about $750,000 to build. The game has also been licensed for Japan, and the first Far Eastern *Center* will open shortly after the Chicago introduction this fall.

The *Center* will either book reservations for teams or mix and match individuals on the spot. A half-hour of playing time should run $5 to $6.

Top Coin-Ops for June 1989

Figures Provided by *RePlay Magazine*, based on an earnings/opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Video Games

1. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
2. *Off Road* by Leland
3. *Operation Thunderbolt* by Taito
4. *Narc* by Williams
5. *Chase H.Q.* by Taito
6. *Team Quarterback* by Leland
7. *Cyberball* by Atari
8. *RoboCop* by Data East
9. *Out Run* by Sega
10. *Power Drift* by Sega

Best New Upright Video Games

1. *Strider* by Capcom
2. *Turbo Outrun* by Sega
3. *Mechanized Attack* by SNK
4. *Apache 3* by Data East

Best Software

1. *Ninja Gaiden* by Tecmo
2. *Wrestle War* by Sega
3. *Cabal* by Fabtek
4. *Bottom of the Ninth* by Konami
5. *Splatterhouse* by Sharp Image
6. *Capcom Bowling* by Capcom
7. *Final Round* by Konami
8. *Superman* by Taito
9. *Cobra Command* by Data East
10. *Shinobi* by Sega

D&D Fans Can Win Games for Life

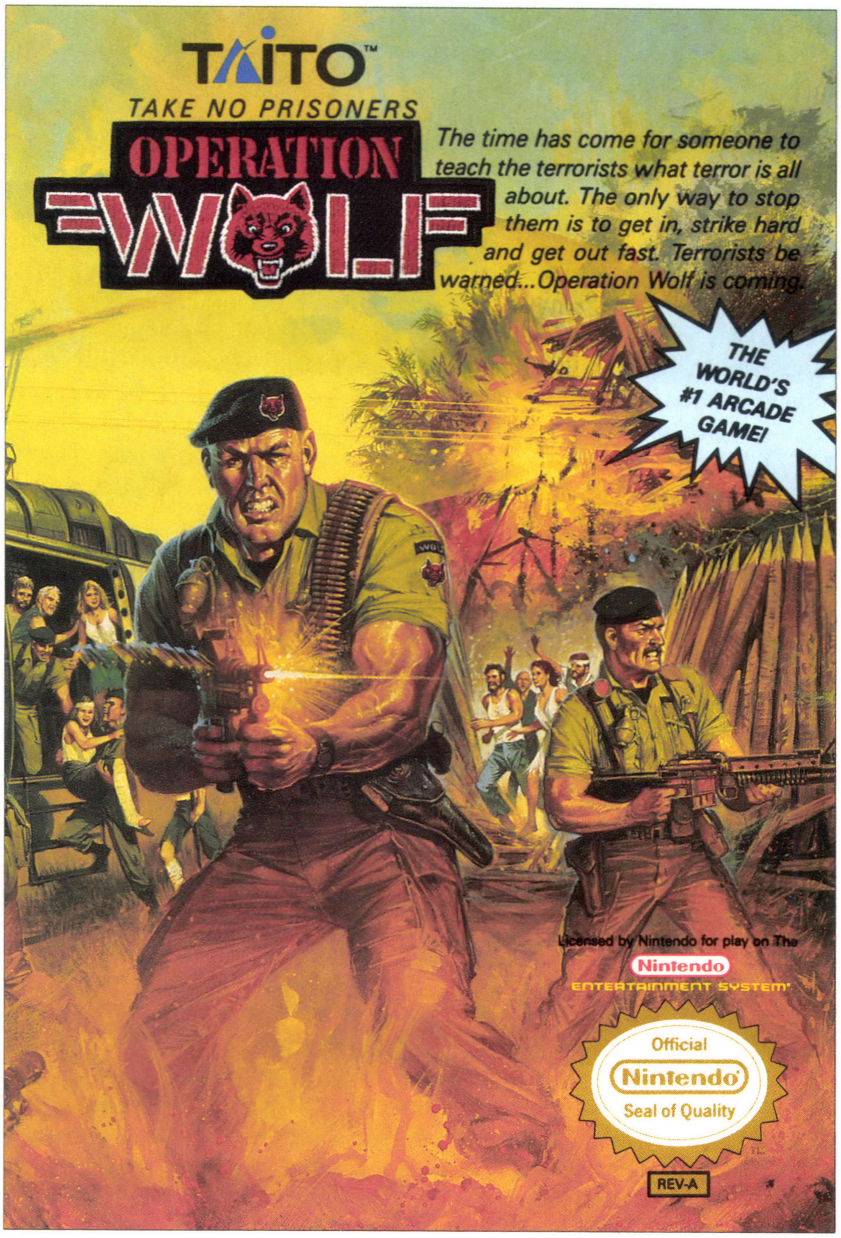
SSI is backing its growing line of products based on "Dungeons & Dragons." Customers who send the in-pack coupon back to the publisher are automatically entered in the sweepstakes.

The company conducted the first of two

drawings at a recent gaming convention, and the second is scheduled for SSI headquarters at the end of October. Each winner receives all of the company's future "D&D" products. The company has already introduced three games, *Pool of Radiance, Heroes of the Lance* and *Hillsfar*.

TAKE NO PRISONERS.

OPERATION WOLF® FOR YOUR NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM.®



Now you can thrill to the world's best arcade game right on your Nintendo Entertainment System.® Operation Wolf® takes you on a prisoner rescue mission you'll never forget. Mind-blowing arcade quality graphics put you behind enemy lines where you must destroy the terrorists and save helpless prisoners. One play and you'll know why it's the world's number 1 arcade game. Operation Wolf® uses Nintendo Zapper® or standard controller.

For more arcade quality fun at home, grab Taito's other action packed hits for the Nintendo Entertainment System.® Renegade,™ the fast paced street-style Karate brawl. Bubble Bobble,™ the totally addictive dinosaur delight. And coming soon, Sky Shark,® the arcade's meanest, most explosive high-flying World War II air battle.

TAITO™
THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN.™

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Gamers Hear Taito Rap

Knowing about Taito's home video and computer games can earn a trip to the set of MTV's *Yo! MTV Raps* show in New York. For five months this fall and winter, a dozen

teen and computer-game magazines will carry details of Taito's "Say Rap, Say Taito, Say Yo" contest.

Alan Fetzer, Taito Software Inc. president, is very optimistic about the contest, stating that the company hopes to receive over 100,000 entries. "We wanted to find something as hot as video games. We could have had a high-score contest or taken somebody for a plane ride [to tie in with *Sky Shark*], but we feel that most kids are into rap. The only thing as hot as Nintendo is rap."

To qualify, the gamer reads the Taito rap on the contest flyer and fills in the names of Taito games on the entry blank. The grand prize is a trip for four to MTV's number-one show to meet an actual rapmaster. Second, third and fourth prizes include Side Out sportswear, Reebok sneakers and Ray Ban sunglasses. Taito will also give early entrants buttons and T-shirts.

First Star Becomes Intracorp Affiliate

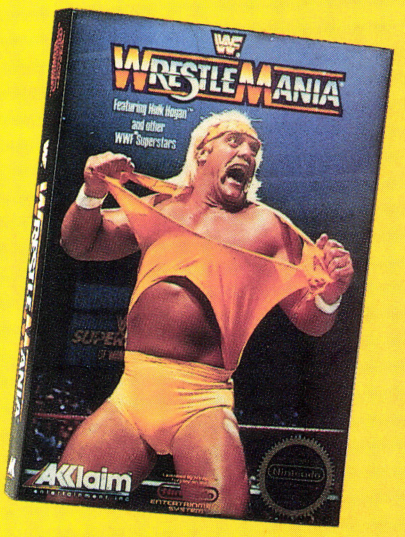
First Star Software returns to the consumer market as an entertainment software label under a new deal with Miami-based Intracorp. The first titles covered by the new affiliate agreement are *Superman: Man of Steel, Millennium Warriors* and *Security Alert*.

First Star was founded in 1982 by Richard Spitalny and Fernando Herrera. Its past hits include *Boulder Dash, Astro Chase* and *Spy vs. Spy*. First Star had become a design house with games including *Rockford* (Mastertronics) and *Omnicron Conspiracy* (Epyx) to its credit.

Mat Game Champs See Real Matches

Two wrestling fans won a trip to this year's Great American Bash at a demonstration of FCI's forthcoming *World Championship Wrestling* for the Nintendo. Sean True and Eric Sandberg received a trip to Baltimore for the Bash, a major wrestling event staged by the National Wrestling Alliance, to see the grapplers who star in the video game.

On hand for the contest was the NWA's best-known tag team, the Road Warriors. Hawk and Animal posed for photos, signed autographs and even played FCI's soon-to-be-released cartridge.



Etch-A-Sketch Gets Flight Simulator

The latest game cartridge for the Etch-A-Sketch Animator 2000 is *Flyby*, a jet flight simulator. The pilot controls the take off, landing and navigation, as well as in-air flying sequences. It's not *Flight Simulator II*, but it *is* a great deal more than you might expect on the high-tech toy from Ohio Art.

Etch-A-Sketch was introduced in 1960. In 1986 the Etch-A-Sketch Animator added a microprocessor to the classic drawing toy which let artists connect 12 pictures into an animation. In 1988, Ohio Art introduced the Animator 2000, a programmable laptop drawing and animation system that uses a touch

pad to put drawings on-screen. Its enhanced capabilities included 30 computer-aided drawing functions, 22 screens and 99 frames of animation at variable speeds.

The Animator sells for $130. Other titles currently available on cartridge ($25) include a miniature-golf game, a road-racing contest and a fighter-pilot simulation.

Dragon Mess Cleaned Up

Acclaim, Tradewest and American Technos reached an out-of-court settlement concerning licensing and distribution of *Double Dragon II: The Revenge*. Under the terms of the agreement, Acclaim will introduce the NES version of *DD II* early in 1990. Tradewest will continue to be the sole supplier of the NES version of the first game, *Double Dragon*, and will also merchandise the floppy disk version of *Double Dragon II*.

Ken Iwamoto, president of American Technos, commented on the settlement: "We're very pleased that the three companies could come to an amicable agreement on their own. Now, everyone can enjoy the *Double Dragon* games."

The two *Double Dragon* games were designed by Technos Japan Corporation, the parent firm of American Technos.

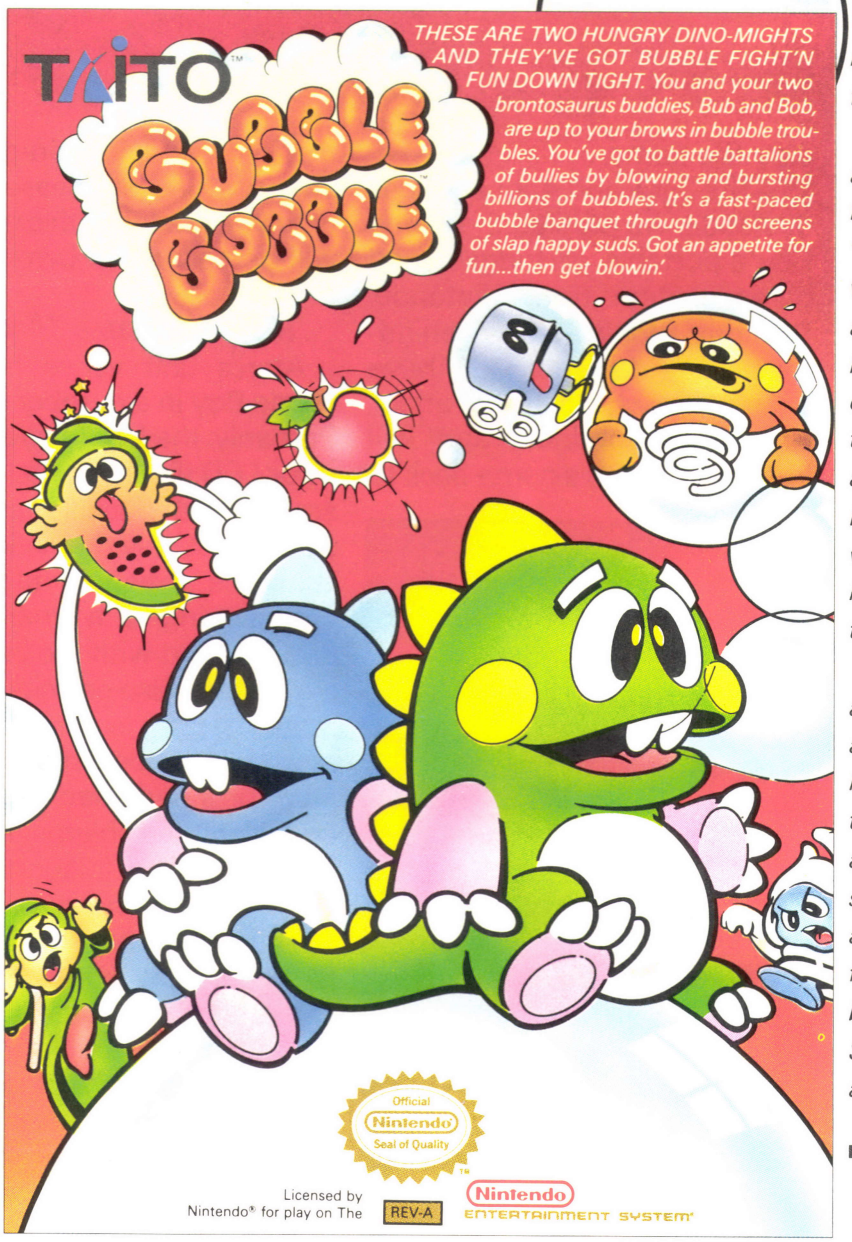
Video Gives Game Hints

A 40-minute tape filled with hints for scoring more on popular Nintendo cartridges is available from Studio Video Distributing. *Video Game Guide: Volume 1*, which will retail for $9.95, is hosted by five young gamers, ages 11 to 16.

The first volume in this video cassette series contains tips for rolling up higher scores in *Legendary Wings, Adventures of Lolo, Bionic Commando, Cobra Command, Adventure Island, Milon's Secret Castle, Rampage, Golgo 13, Bomberman* and *Joust*. If the initial tape is successful, Studio Video will follow up with an additional volume to cover more Nintendo games.

BUBBLE BOBBLE™ IS DINO-MIGHT!

(FOR YOUR NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM.®)



These are two hungry dino-mights and they've got bubble fight'n fun down tight.

Bubble Bobble™ is totally addictive action. Computer Entertainer Magazine says "it's impossible to resist...you want to play over and over again." Bubble Bobble™ has been Europe's #1 game for over 3 months. You'll scramble through 100 screens of laughs as your brontosaurus buddies, Bub and Bob, blow you away with endless action. If you're lookin' for fun, these dudes are the ones.

For more arcade quality fun at home, grab Taito's other action packed hits for the Nintendo Entertainment System.® Operation Wolf,® the awesome prisoner rescue mission and the world's number 1 arcade game. Renegade,™ the fast paced street-style Karate brawl. And coming soon, Sky Shark,® the arcade's meanest air battle.

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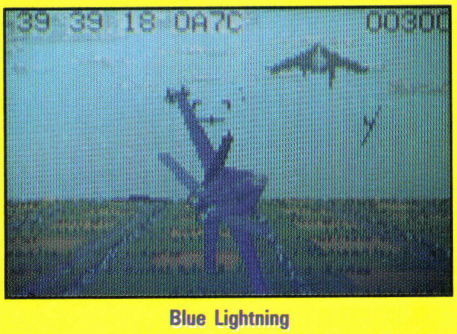
Big Games in Small Packages

by Andy Eddy

Less than a decade ago, if you mentioned the word "Atari" in conversation, talk would rapidly turn to fun and games on a TV screen, titles like *Battlezone* and *Space Invaders* and how long you played the night before. Atari sold millions of their 2600 game consoles and was king of the video-game hill—sort of the Nintendo of the early '80s.

Then the Crash of 1984 came about, Atari ended up breaking up into two different companies (Atari Corp., the computer manufacturer, and Atari Games, the coin-op company and parent to Tengen) and, as we well know, Nintendo took over as reigning champ of the game market. But reputations and ghosts of the past hang tough. Although they still sell some video-game products, Atari (Corp., that is) is also having trouble selling its powerful ST line of computers to *serious* users because of their strong ties to electronic-game machines. There's an old saying that seems to fit here: The more things change, the more things stay the same.

In the June and August issues of VG&CE, we profiled the Game Boy, a portable, cartridge-based game system from Nintendo. Recently, though, some behind-the-scenes developments have been made which directly attack Nintendo's handheld and will likely bring Atari's name back to the forefront of video-game industry. Due for release by the time you read this, this handheld will be called the Lynx.



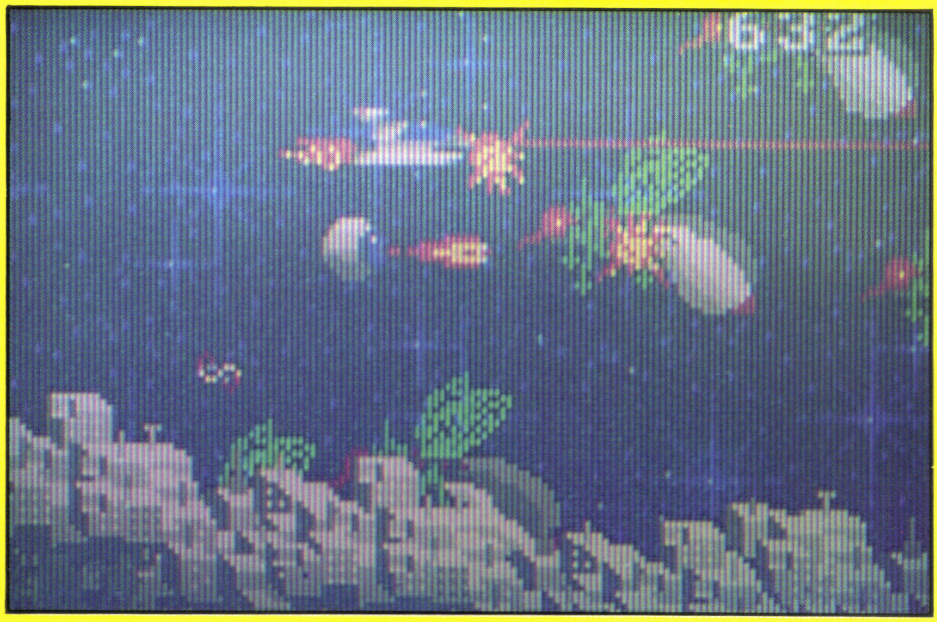
Blue Lightning

Blue Lightning

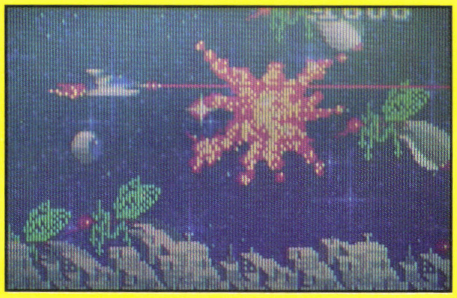
A Handy Game Machine

Atari's unit varies from the Game Boy in a number of ways. Primarily, the Lynx has a built-in *color* LCD (liquid crystal display) screen with backlighting. The display not only dramatically lessens the eyestrain associated with playing on a small screen, but, coupled with the backlighting system, also permits the user more freedom in *where* it can be played. It can be used in a plane, a car or a darkened room, with no visibility problems, and having a 3½-inch (diagonal) color screen is the cherry on top.

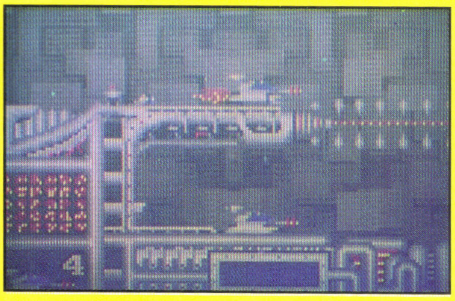
The images are crisp and richly hued, displaying up to 16 colors simultaneously out of a palette of 4,096 colors in a resolution of 160×102 pixels. Also, the processing speed of 16 MHz is faster than many full-sized computers on the market, a feature that allows for smooth,



Gates of Zendocon



Gates of Zendocon



Gates of Zendocon

quick animations and clean sound generation. The system's 64 kilobits of RAM and capability of handling game cards containing up to 16 megabits of information don't hurt either.

Similar to the Game Boy, the Lynx also uses battery power, but, understandably, at a much higher rate: Six AA batteries last approximately four to six hours, but AC adapter and cigarette lighter (no price announced at press time) power attachments are available for long-term use. The Lynx is also larger than the Game Boy, though it still is comfortable from a size and weight standpoint: It measures 4¼ inches × 10¼ inches × 1¼ inches and weighs in at a mere one pound.

The unit also comes complete with an eight-way "joypad," two fire buttons and three option buttons (that allow up to five different functions), as well as volume, brightness and contrast controls. There are also a couple of jacks provided: a headphone jack for private game sessions and a Comm-Link communications port for multiplayer games. Not only will the Lynx's Comm-Link cable allow head-to-head play, with each player seeing the action from his respective view, but up to *16* players can compete in this manner (though software may limit this in some cases). Some games let multiple players team up for cooperative play.

Lastly, lefthanders will be interested in another feature of the Lynx that will directly benefit them. With a push of two buttons, the screen image will flip upside-down, enabling comfortable left-handed configuration of the controls by simply turning the machine 180 degrees. This represents an innovative break from tradition.

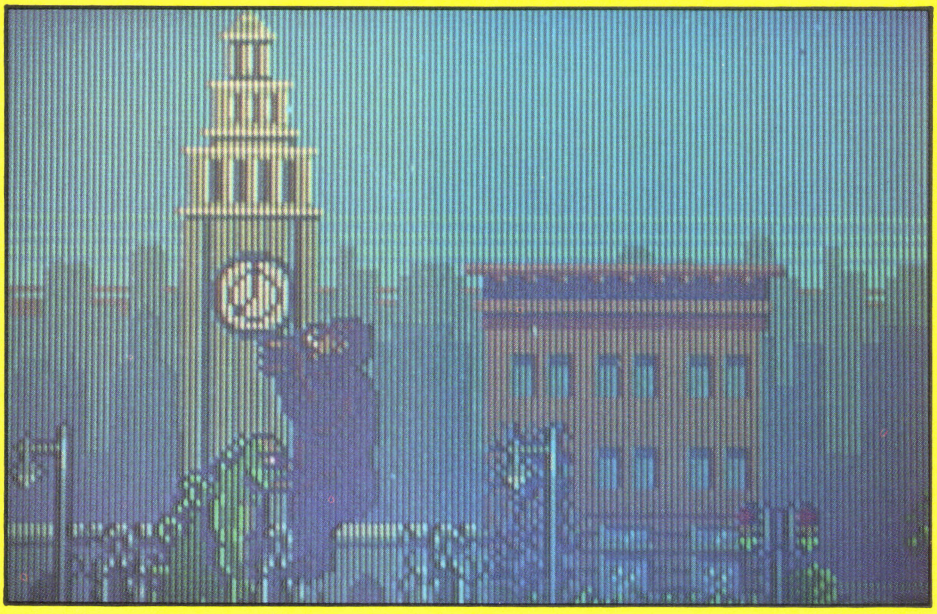
Handheld History

Though it was introduced at the summer CES in Chicago, the history of the Lynx spans many months before. The project actually started under Epyx in 1987 when Dave Needle (then recently departed from Apple), R.J. Mical (who was finishing up contracts at his own company) and Epyx's then-Chairman Dave Morse brainstormed that a portable color game system would be exciting, even though it would be pushing the limits of technology. Needle and Mical have experience with technology's boundaries, as they were integral in the development of the Amiga computer before it came under Commodore's roof.

The important concept to the trio was developing technology-based *entertainment* products. "Some people create works of art, make one or two of them, then sell them to rich people," Needle said, "but that's not what we're interested in. We're in the business of consumer electronics... we want it to be fun."

VG&CE first saw it demonstrated behind closed doors at the winter CES in January 1989. At that time, Epyx was in the middle stages of completing the hardware, and the Handy Game (as it was being called at that point) was nowhere near as portable as it was intended: The project was then a series of circuit boards and other specialized hardware that took up much of a small room. The positive side was that it was the first working model and an early indication of the system's capabilities.

In the course of the six months from January to June of 1989—up to the summer CES in Chicago, where the unit was first shown under Atari's name—the project went through major changes. In the end, it was decided that it would benefit both Epyx and Atari for the Lynx to be "split" between the two companies—Atari would handle the production and marketing of the hardware, through their overseas manufacturing plants and existing sales network, and Epyx would oversee the development of software for Lynx. This arrangement was literally inked in the hours before the Lynx was to make its debut at the June 1989 CES, and it was shown successfully in Atari's booth. But the transition from one company's charge to another can often spell disaster for a product. "We were happy that we didn't have to throw away any features," Needle noted. "It just got better."



Rampage

Electrocop

Showing Your Wares

The key to any game machine, though, is the software that is available for it. The games we saw demonstrated on the Lynx were quite impressive, and some, due to Epyx's role in the product, are familiar to computer gamers. Here's a list of what is currently available (all will retail for $34.99):

Rampage

California Games—In a duplication of the popular video and computer game, this entry in the *Games* series lets you compete in a number of sports: skateboard high-jumping, BMX bicycling, foot bag booting and freestyle surfing. This is the game that will be packaged with the Lynx.

Gauntlet III—In the typical *Gauntlet* style, this game sets one or more players on a trek through castles and outer space in search of the Star Gem. The journey contains over 20 enemies and more than 20 levels of action. *Gauntlet III* is the first to utilize an alternate handling of the Lynx: You hold it at a

Magic Johnson's BASKETBALL

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Make the "jump shot," the "alley oop," the "pick 'n roll," and of course Magic's famous fast break with a "slam dunk" finish. Dribble 'round your opponent to make the "lay up" that wins the game!

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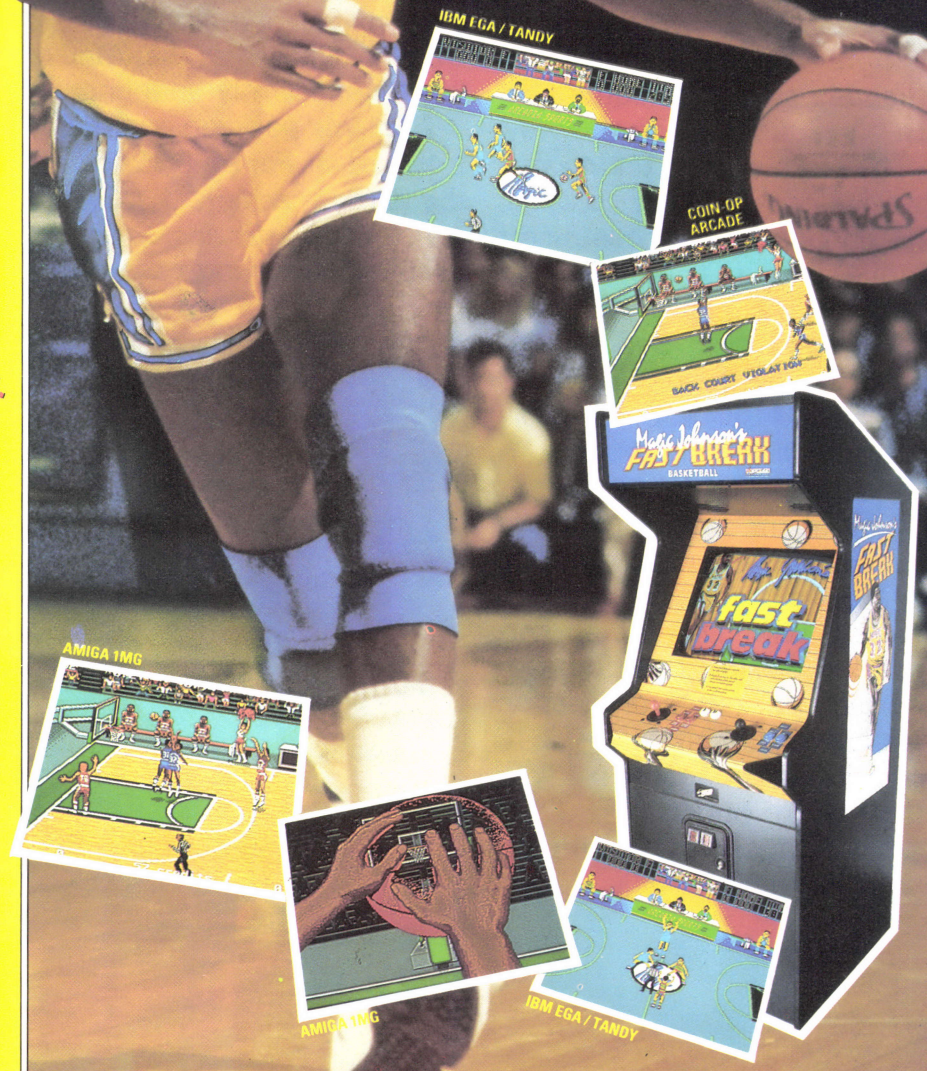
GAME INCLUDES *Magic Johnson* POSTER



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90-degree angle from "normal" play, in an upright position; control is still comfortable in this mode.

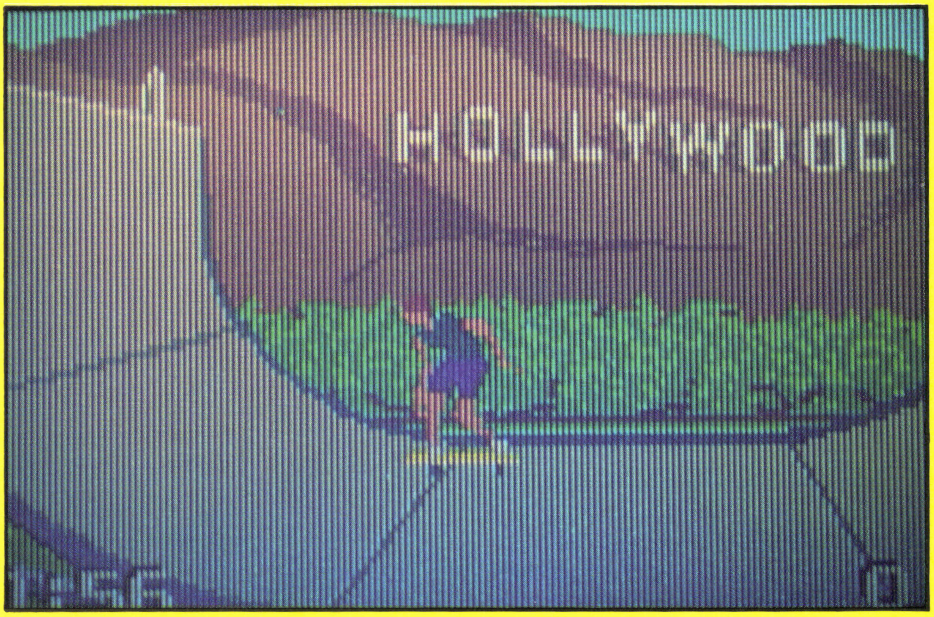
Rampage—Mutant monsters have been let loose on the city and are making a *big* mess. No, you're not the one to stop them—you *are* them! Playable with multiple players, you have to wreck everything in your path, and avoid the planes and tanks that fire on you.

Electrocop—This exciting game adds depth and 3-D perspective to the action. The player has to wind his way through a building sprinkled with mazes, booby traps and sinister robots, trying to discover the combination to locked doors en route to saving the President's daughter. Weapons and other battle aids can be acquired along the way.

The Gates of Zendocon—Packing only a neutrino laser, photon bombs and destructor shield (as if they weren't enough!), the player must escape from the Zendocons, through over 50 various universes. This arcade-like, scrolling shoot-'em-up is tough.

Blue Lightning—Hop in your jet and fly at the highest possible speed, combating enemy pilots and ground targets. You'll face ten missions with five different terrains and will be equipped with two different forms of weapon to help you get through. Akin to *After Burner*, this game held our attention for hours.

At the present time, all software development is taking place through Epyx (though the first six titles will be marketed through Atari). There are plans to license third-party developers to create a catalog of software for the Lynx, but at press time there were no companies that Atari or Epyx could firmly announce.



California Games

The Lynx package is certainly a good deal. For $149.95 you get the game machine, the *California Games* cartridge, an AC adapter, a carrying case and a Comm-Link cable. This compares favorably to the Game Boy's $90 package price, for which you get the game system, *Tetris* cartridge, Video Link cable and "bud" stereo headphones.

So, Atari is back in force. They've recently realized how it feels to go from rags to riches—and back again. There's no doubt that with the Lynx, they are shooting for the top once more. And they may very well make it.

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EASTER EGG HUNT

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint!

We're always looking for new Easter Eggs, and you can help us. Simply send the hints and tips you uncover to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up	**L = Left**	**A = "A" button**
D = Down	**R = Right**	**B = "B" button**

Athena
(SNK for the NES)

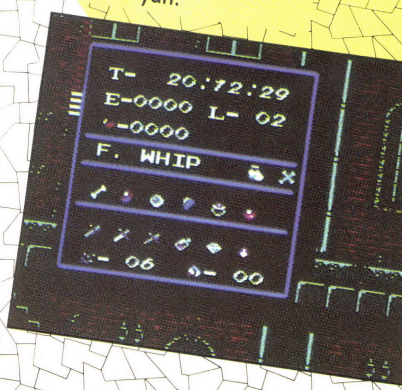
Derrick Nunnally of Columbus, Missouri, sent us a way to build up your capabilities. In Area 1, when you see a small red-spotted mushroom (after the larger spotted mushroom), squat down on it, and you'll receive a fire sword, a dragon helmet and a lion shield. Ten bucks to you, Derrick.

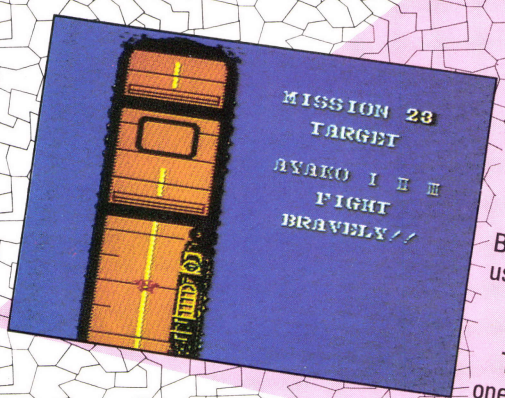
Castlevania II: Simon's Quest
(Konami for the NES)

Bryan Datu of Daly City, California, has given us these codes to help defeat Dracula:

D	Y	3	1		L	X	D	Y
W	4	5	X		T	G	J	X

Thanks for your help, Bryan.





1943
(Capcom for the NES)

To help you see farther into this dogfight, Berick Partridge of Washington, Iowa, gives us this password that you can use:

T Y 1 9 U

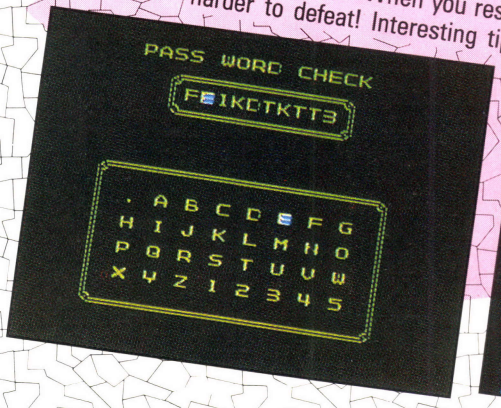
This will take you to Level 23 with all but one of your capabilities filled. Thanks, Berick.

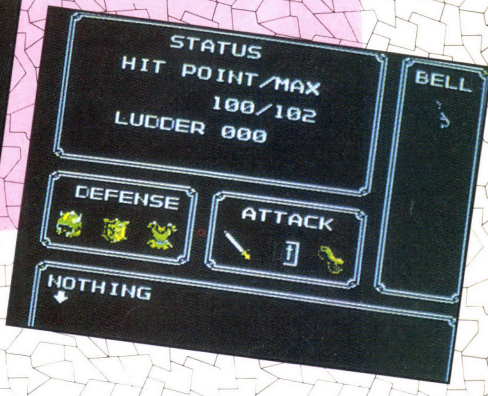
Afterburner
(Sega for the SMS)

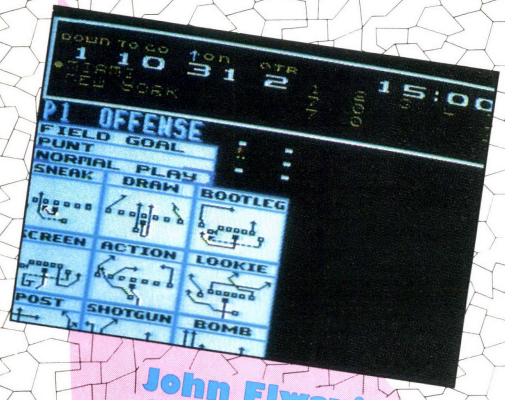
If you're having trouble getting deep into this game, you can use this tip to continue more than three times after Level 8: When you are in the title screen, before the demonstration starts, press the pause button 100 times, then start the game. You'll be able to continue to Stage 17.

Deadly Towers
(Broderbund for the NES)

Peter Siamidis of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, helps us build up our weapons and defenses for this battle. First, start the game and lose as soon as you can. Enter the password mode and change the first two characters to EF or FE. When you restart, you'll be harder to defeat! Interesting tip, Peter.

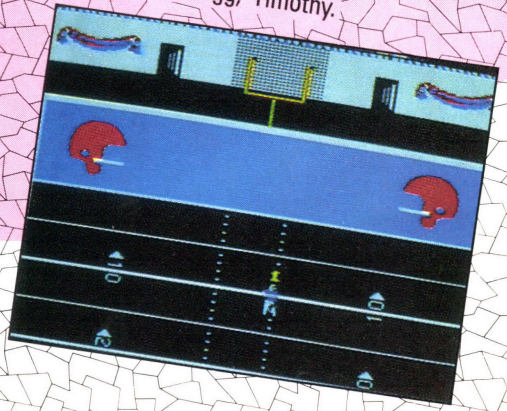


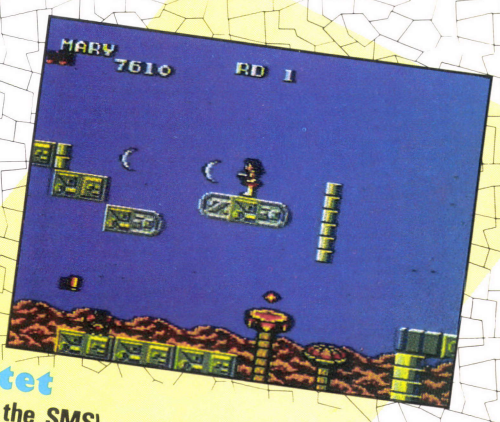




John Elway's Quarterback
(Tradewest for the NES)

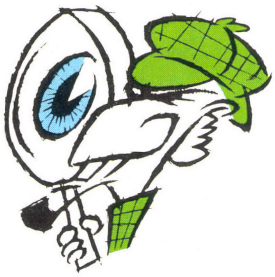
Timothy Bettencourt of New Bedford, Massachusetts, gives us a great hint which results in some wild open-field running. When you have the ball, pick either the "normal" or "reverse" play, and let time run out. If you quickly complete a pass to a teammate, he'll take off, leaving the rest of the players way behind him. Instant TD! Nice egg, Timothy.





Quartet
(Sega for the SMS)

If you want to give Mary the "wide beam" weapon from the start of the game, just hit the pause button 14 times at the title screen, then start the game with the #1 button. Very easy!



REVIEWS

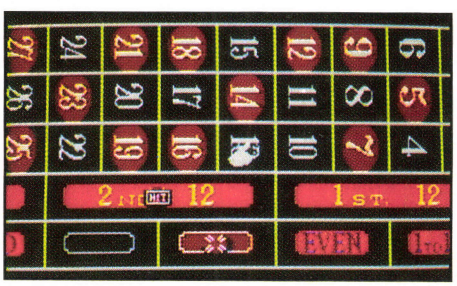
Vegas Dream

HAL America

For the Nintendo Entertainment System
(Price to be announced)

Vegas Dream turns your NES into a gambling machine on which you can play blackjack, slot machines, roulette and keno. The graphics are bright, the music is bouncy and the whole thing is a lot of fun. I think it even lets you win a little more than you would in the "real" world.

The opening screen of *Vegas Dream* shows the Vegas Strip of flashing lights on all those fabulous casinos. You can enter your name so that the game knows you, moving a hand around a window containing the letters of the alphabet. You can even put a Mr. or Miss—sorry, no Mrs. or Ms.—in front of your name. More than one can play, and money can be transferred between players. The name-entry screen precedes both of the choices on the opening screen: Vegas Dream and One Spot. These both allow you to play the same games, so I'm not sure why there are two choices. However, Vegas Dream appears to provide the option of continuing an earlier game

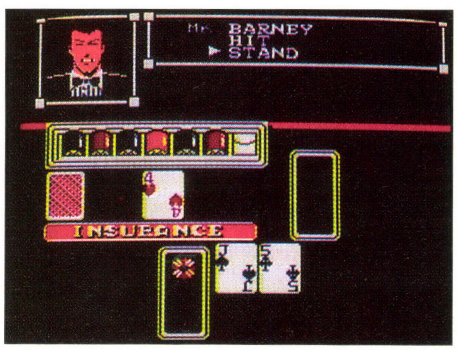


The games in *Vegas Dream* were programmed to follow the actual rules of the casino.

by allowing you the opportunity to enter a 26-character password. Unfortunately, the password facility was nonfunctional in the version I played. Not only is it virtually impossible to tell the difference between the number zero and a letter 'O', but even entering a valid password produces no results.

Once you get past the nonsense about the password, playing *Vegas Dream* is very entertaining. The selection screen lets you choose between the four games by moving a die (singular of dice, if you are wondering) under your choice and pressing the START button. You begin each game with $700.

Blackjack is the standard version, where you try to get closer to 21 than the dealer to win your bet. The dealer gives you two cards first, then deals his own, one up, one down. You have the option of asking for more cards ("hit") or not ("stand"). The game supports insurance (if the dealer is showing an ace), doubling down



HAL America's *Vegas Dream* takes you into the casino for such gaming activities as blackjack, keno and slot machines.

and splitting. Betting is easy: You move the cursor under the digit you want to change ($1, $10 or $100) and press the control pad up to increase that digit or down to decrease. As with "real" blackjack, you must place your bet before the hand is dealt. The gaming table scrolls back and forth on the screen to show the dealer's cards and yours, an annoying effect since there is plenty of room on the screen without this slow scrolling.

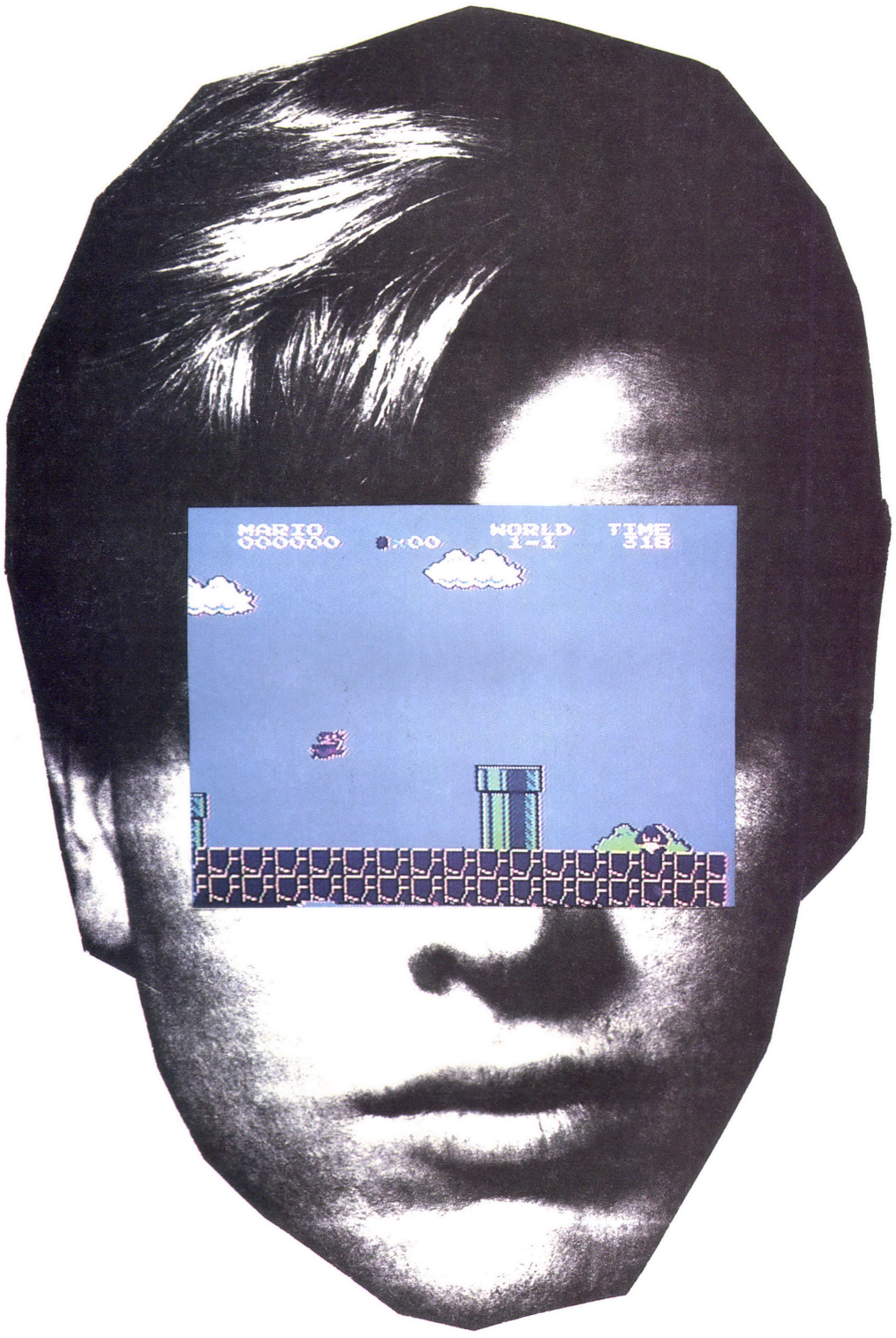
If you choose roulette, a complete roulette table is shown (including 0 or 00), and you can make bets by moving your pointer around the table, which will scroll as your pointer approaches the edge of the screen. To place a bet, you must select the area you want to bet on, then decide how much to bet (just as with blackjack). If you change your mind about betting on a particular area, just bet $0. Once your bet is placed, you can watch the roulette wheel spin and the ball come to rest in the number. You are then paid off—if you are lucky enough to win.

There are two variations of the slot machines. Pot o' gold lets you bet from $1 to $100 and select how many lines on the slot machine can pay off. Then you pull the lever (with a press on the "B" button) and watch as the fruits and vegetables roll by in the windows. If you win, the coins come spilling out the chute.

The second game is called jackpot bar. You can again bet from $1 to $100, but there is no going back to a smaller wager without restarting the game. The characters on the reels are all variations of the word bar, hence the name.

The last game is keno. Here you are presented with a board of

(continued on page 33)



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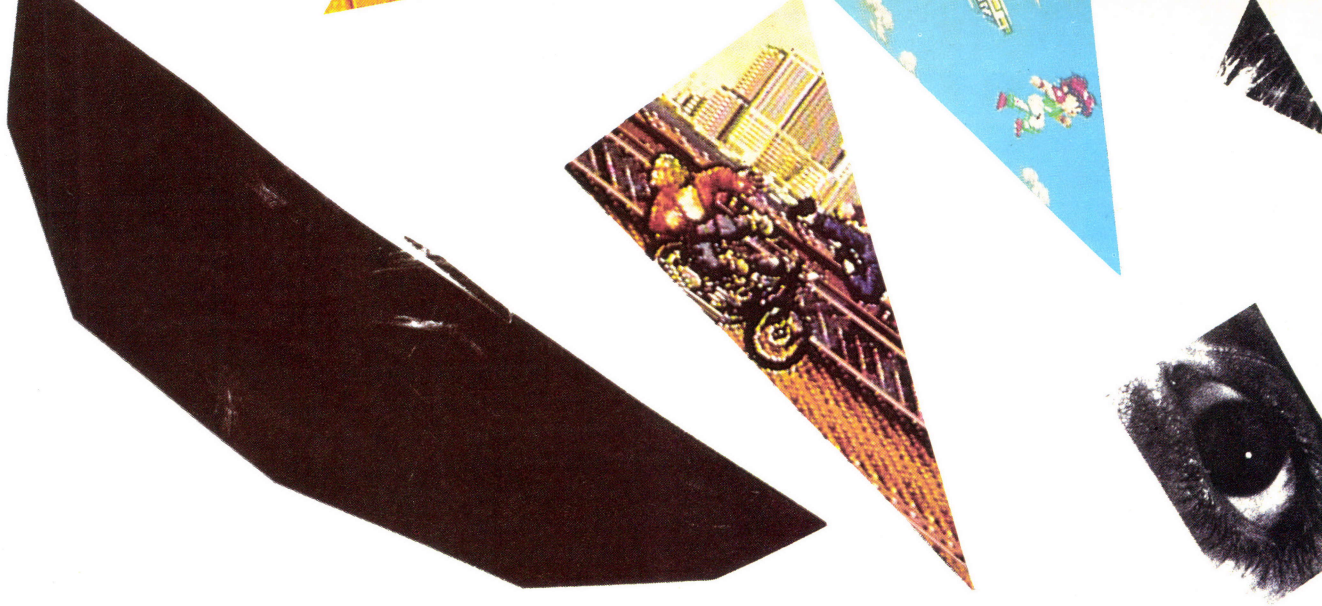

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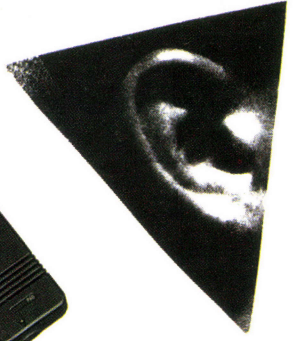

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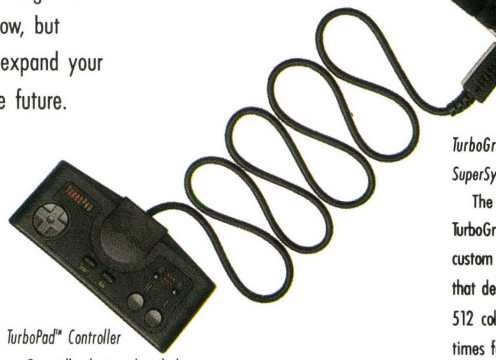

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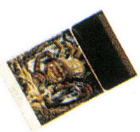

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CIRCLE #112 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

(continued from page 28)

numbers from 1 through 80. From those, you may select between one and 15 numbers, then place your bet. The game selects 15 numbers, and you are paid off depending on how many matching numbers you have.

There are many things to like about *Vegas Dream*. The graphics are good, including the screens which appear between rounds of a game. Games can be changed at the touch of the SELECT button, so you can play anything you want, as many times as you want.

Sadly, the instructions that come with *Vegas Dream* are woefully inadequate. Many people may not know how to play some of these games, especially blackjack—do you know what "doubling down" means?—or keno. None of this is explained in the manual, which is a shame. Other than that, though, the game is bright and fun, and you don't even have to part with any real money (except to buy the cartridge).

—David Plotkin

HAL America, 7873 SW Cirrus Drive, 25-F, Beaverton, OR 97005; (503) 644-4117.

California Games

Sega

For the Sega Master System ($49.95)

With the release of Epyx's *California Games* for the Sega Master System, every owner of a SMS, no matter where he lives, can now take part in some traditional California "fun-in-the-sun" sports. Six events—skateboarding, foot bag, surfing, roller skating, BMX bike racing and flying disk—are offered to the young or just the young-at-heart, with trophies awarded to the top three champions.

The opening game menu allows several ways to play. You and up to seven other people may compete in all six events, compete in your selection of just some of the events, compete in only one event or practice any events you wish.

In the skateboard event, you must use the arrow pad to build up speed as you roll back and forth in the "pipe." The arrow pad

Take on the half-pipe on your skateboard, but you won't get any points if you don't do some tricks, like hand-plants or aerials.

and the "B" button are used to perform several tricks, including kick turns, aerial turns and hand plants, for points ranging from 100 to 999.

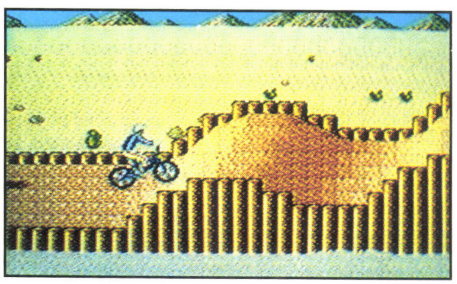
In foot bag, the player must keep a bean bag in the air without using his hands. The bag may bounce off the player's feet, legs or head, and a variety of jumps, turns and kicks will rack up many points for the skilled player.

The surfing event is probably the easiest to get started in. In fact, it's so easy to stay on the board (once you get it moving on a horizontal course), you can, if you like, even take your hands off the controller. But the only way to rack up points is to live on the dangerous side, performing tricky stunts like "catching air" and "riding the tube." The more risks you take, the higher your score.

When you enter the surfing event, will you ride the tube or take a gnarly wipeout, dude?

If you prefer to keep your feet on solid ground, the roller-skating event will probably be less nerve wracking than trying to keep your balance on a rocketing surfboard. Here, you control the skater down a boardwalk, performing spins and jumps and avoiding the many obstacles in your path. Grass, sand, shoes, puddles and bouncing beach balls are just some of the items you'll need to dodge if you want to stay on your feet. Points are awarded for avoiding obstacles and for performing tricks.

BMX bike racing has you riding over a race course in the California desert. Like the roller-skating event, there are many obstacles to avoid. There are also bumps, jumps and hills you must navigate



The BMX bicycling event in Sega's *California Games* takes you over some rough terrain, like logs, hills and holes.

successfully. The faster you complete the course, the higher your score. In addition, you're awarded points for completing such stunts as wheelies, jumps, flips and 360-degree turns.

Finally, the flying disk contest (Frisbee) presents the player with the task of having to control both the disk's thrower and catcher. Before tossing the disk, you set its speed and angle. Once the disk is in the air, you must control the catcher, with various types of catches racking up points.

Just so that you can get into a West-Coast mood when playing *California Games*, Sega has included a glossary of California words in the manual. The young people won't need these pages, of course, but the over-thirty crowd will be pleased to discover what words like "gnarly," "tubular" and "awesome" really mean. You can have fun and get an education too.

Several of the games included here, such as skateboarding, roller skating and BMX bike racing, alone would be worth the price of the cartridge. Put them all together and add the other events, and you've got an excellent video-game value.

I mean, like, this game is, like, totally awesome, dude.

—Clayton Walnum

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd., South San Francisco, CA 94080; (415) 742-9300, (800) USA-SEGA.

Mappy-Land

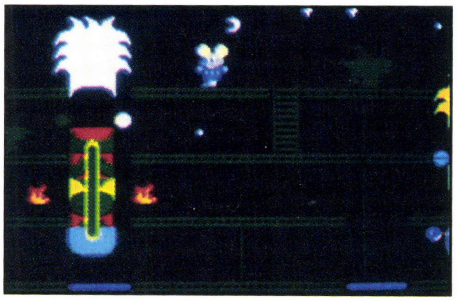
Taxan

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($34.99)

In Japan, where the original version of the Nintendo Entertainment System rules, "cute" is common—cute *games*, that is. But here in the United States that's just not so, except for a few titles. Well, to add to the short list of cute games, there's Taxan's *Mappy-Land*. It may be cute, but that doesn't mean it isn't good.

Mappy-Land is the NES translation of an arcade game by Namco. Though popular in Japan, this title was obscure and difficult to find in arcade centers around this country. That comes as no surprise, however, since the original *Mappy* coin-op—*Mappy-Land* is actually a sequel—was only a sleeper hit in the U.S.

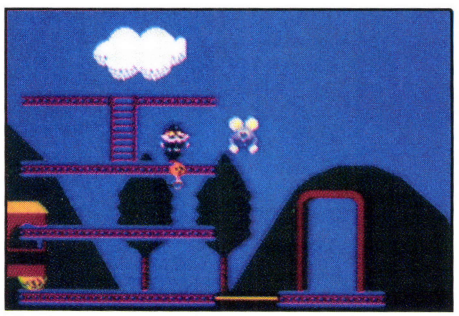
The storyline to *Mappy-Land* reeks of cuteness right off. Mappy, a hard-working policemouse, is on a four-stage personal mission.



Mappy must negotiate the platforms and ladders without getting caught by the Mukies that are hot on his tail.

First off, it's his girlfriend's birthday. However, the Guchi Gang (a group of evil cats called Mukies), under their leader the fat cat Nyamco, have stolen all of Mappy's presents for his girlfriend Mapico. (I'm not making up any of these names, I swear.)

Eager to please his girl, Mappy must explore eight different screens to recover the presents. In the second stage, Mappy must recover rings from the eight screens in time for his wedding with Mapico.



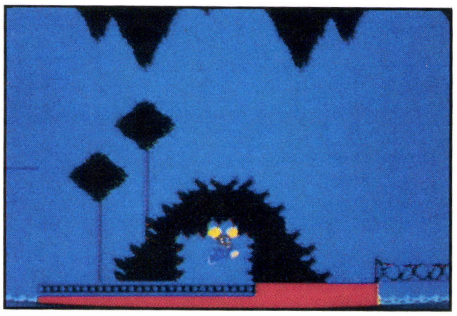
Careful bounces on the trampoline get Mappy from platform to platform safely.

The third stage involves gathering stolen Christmas trees, while the fourth requires you to pick up balls for Mappy Jr.'s birthday party.

Each of the eight screens has its own theme setting such as Railroad Town, Western World and Seventh Avenue, and most are made up of multifloored obstacle courses. You move Mappy from one floor to another by either jumping him on a trampoline or making him climb up or down ladders. Weapons are available for Mappy to use on Nyamco and the Guchi Gang—toys that resemble cattails, gold coins, medicine pots and fish. Weapons that are "built-in" to the particular screen that Mappy is on include pulleys, punching bags, fireworks, pop-up sticks, bowling balls, flashlights and horizontal bars.

Mappy-Land is a combination arcade/adventure game. Though there are a number of adventure elements such as figuring your way through the various sublevels and locating hidden exits, the arcade aspect is prevalent throughout gameplay. This makes *Mappy-Land* a simple video game to play, and yet it's a challenging one that doesn't frustrate players. Especially nice is that you can select all the odd-numbered screens in every one of the four stages. Also, there's an unlimited "continue game" option.

The only fault with *Mappy-Land* is its background graphics. Foreground characters and objects tend to mesh in with the elaborately



The backgrounds in *Mappy-Land* are colorful and provide a nice backdrop to the arcade fun.

detailed backgrounds. This is a common problem in many Nintendo games, and it makes locating necessary objects and seeing computerized enemies (and your own player) harder than it should be. But this is a minor problem that's alleviated once you become familiar with all the objects and characters on the game screen. If you play your Nintendo on a computer monitor, there shouldn't be a problem at all.

One big plus about *Mappy-Land* is its catchy tunes. Each screen and sublevel has its own theme. The music selection ranges from upbeat jazz to the blues. Few games for the Nintendo offer such variety, thus setting *Mappy-Land* apart from the others.

With its colorful scenes and exotic settings, *Mappy-Land* resembles a cross between a video-game version of Disneyland with characters from the Hello Kitty line. Though I do not highly recommend this game, I do think it would be worth your while to check it out—at least borrow a copy from a friend or rent it from a video store.

Overall, the ideal audience for this video game would probably be the real young kids—but older players should still find it generally appealing. Sure, *Mappy-Land* might be cute, but who ever said that cute couldn't be cool?

—Howard H. Wen

Taxan USA, 161 Nortech Parkway, San Jose, CA 95134; (408) 946-9500.

Video Shooter

Placo

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($29.95)

In the never-ending battle against tangles of wires around your Nintendo, Placo has come out with the Video Shooter, a light gun that does not need to be directly plugged into your machine. Instead, a small infrared sensor is plugged into Port 2; the gun transmits a signal which is detected by this sensor. (This is similar to many of the wireless controllers that are on the market.) It works pretty well, although you may be fairly limited as to where

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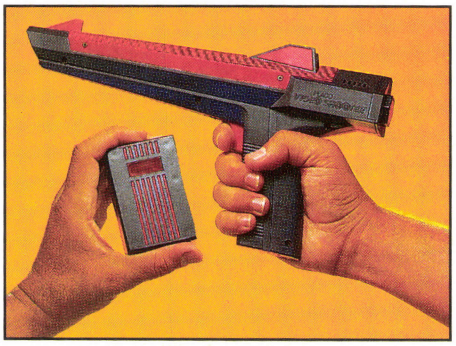
you can locate your game machine in order for the gun to work.

The gun is a sleek black-and-red weapon, equipped with a sight that actually works. The trigger requires a full pull in order to work; a red light at the back of the gun lights up when the trigger is pulled.

The range of the gun is touted as 15 feet, although you'd never want to shoot from that far back. The sensor works well as long as you put your Nintendo where the instructions recommend—directly on top of your TV set. If you place the game to one side of the set, the firing action is often missed if you are shooting at the opposite side of the screen.



Placo's Video Shooter cuts the surly bonds that tie you to your NES by using wireless technology.

Overall, the Video Shooter is a great alternative to a gun wired to your Nintendo, such as Nintendo's own Zoomer, provided that you can set things up as described. If you can, the increased freedom of movement makes shooting games like *Operation Wolf* and *Freedom Force* a lot more fun.

—David Plotkin

Placo Products, 146 West 134th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90061; (213) 329-2611.

Operation Wolf

Taito

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.99)

One has to wonder how many more original games for the Nintendo Zapper there possibly can be made before game players grow tired of the entire light-gun concept. But Taito's *Operation Wolf* breathes new life into the standard aim-and-shoot contest. This latest light-gun game pak derives its title from the hit arcade game. And, like its predecessor, the NES version of *Operation Wolf* should prove to be an immediate success.

Grenades will help you clear out some of the more threatening attackers like helicopters and tanks.

Operation Wolf puts you in the middle of a hostage rescue mission. You must shoot enemy soldiers and their weapons (helicopters, armored cars, gun boats, etc.) with your machine gun through six screens of intense play. Grenades are available that can be thrown, but all your weapons are in limited supply. Shooting boxes of machine-gun magazines and grenades that randomly appear on the game screen help to keep your reserves full.

Your objective, however, isn't an easy one. Like in LJN's *Gotcha!*, your opponents can take aim and shoot back at *you*. All injuries sustained show up on a damage bar. When this bar reaches its critical level, filling up, the game ends, and you fail in your mission. To prevent this, shooting a "power drink" canister reduces your damage level.

Other bonus targets are available for shooting. Blasting a vulture or pig will give you extra bullet magazines as well. Hitting a chicken yields a free grenade. (How the game designers figured that shooting animals and earning bonus ammunition had a connection beats me.) Finally, there's the FREE target which gives you rapid fire for ten seconds and piles of dynamite that can be used to blow up enemies—and civilians.

There are definitely plenty of things to shoot at, but things that you *shouldn't* fire on are the nurses, prisoners and children (yes, *children*) who run across the screen. Gunning down one of these innocent folks will increase your "damage" level. On the fifth screen, the prison camp, extra care must be taken not to shoot the prisoners, as their safe rescue is your primary objective. One at a time, five prisoners walk from the right side of the screen to the left, and you have to make sure that they get to the other side without getting killed. Ruthless soldiers wielding knives will approach the hostages from behind and stab them in the back—unless you stop them.

War is hell, and you'll find yourself facing this screen quite often as a result of your war wounds.

The last screen is the airport. Here you must survive through the entire stage, where the enemy soldiers are even more determined to stop you. If you manage to successfully escape, the President gives you a speech. The kind of speech he gives depends on how many prisoners you were able to rescue. Return home with no prisoners and the President will be very angry. Likewise, complete the game with all five prisoners and he will give you a much happier speech.

The biggest problem with *Operation Wolf* is the number of times the Zapper trigger must be fired. Remember, you're supposed to be firing a *machine gun*: Prepare to experience a sore wrist and calloused index finger. Fortunately, though, the trigger on the light gun doesn't need to be pulled back all the way. A slight yet rapid squeeze should effectively spray a round of ammunition on your video enemies.

Another concern is the extreme violence depicted. Unlike the cardboard cutouts of *Hogan's Alley* or the paint-pellet shooting of *Gotcha!*, this time you're supposed to be *killing* people. Red bursts erupt from the enemy soldiers and civilians when they are shot. Yuck. Things

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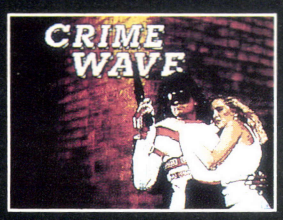
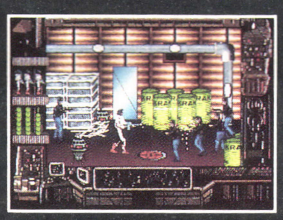
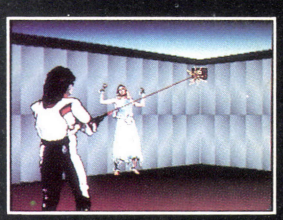






do get pretty graphic, and Taito spared no details when translating their arcade version to the Nintendo. (You can even blast out the windows of the buildings.) The body count in *Operation Wolf* is higher than that of any *Rambo* or *Friday the 13th* movie.

Still, *Operation Wolf* will probably appeal to an older audience, since a majority of light-gun games tend to already attract this kind

In *Operation Wolf*, the screen is filled with various targets for you to shoot.

of crowd. With its non-stop action and strategy, *Operation Wolf* is sure to please those looking for another light-gun game. Just make sure your trigger finger is ready for the grueling challenge.

—Howard H. Wen

Taito Software, 267 West Esplanade, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1A5; (604) 984-3344.

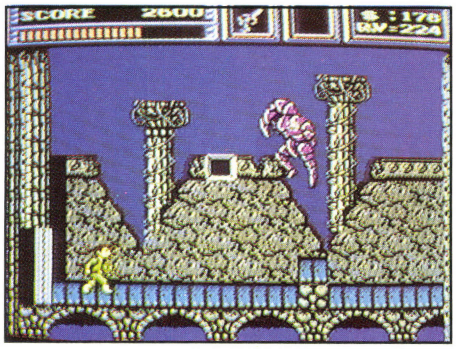
Bashi Bazook

Jaleco

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($42.95)

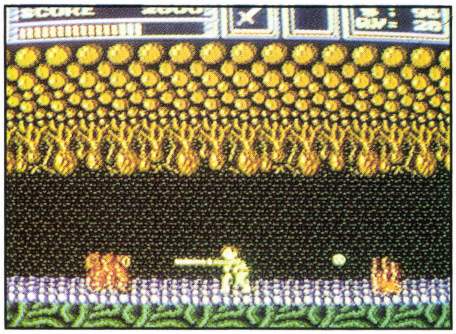
Bashi Bazook is a running and jumping game where the object is to guide the hero through five levels of an invaded Earth Colony in order to prevent the evil morphoids (who writes this stuff?) from dominating Earth. Play action and graphics are excellent, but play slows down noticeably whenever very much is happening on the screen.

Bashi Bazook is played in a series of underground caverns, with ledges, stairs, doorways and pits to make things interesting. The



Morphoids are attacking Earth, and you must guide Bashi Bazook against them to save the planet.

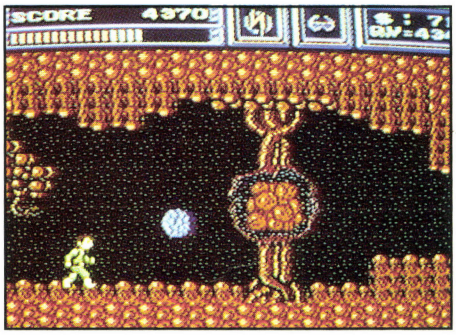
various levels are connected by elevators. Navigating through the caverns wouldn't be too difficult except, of course, for the morphoids, who do whatever they can to stop Bashi. There are quite a few different aliens, but they can be divided into just a few categories. Some fly overhead and drop bombs; there is little that can be done about these until Bashi gets a pair of jet boots. These aliens are easy enough to ignore and are more of a nuisance. There are also some weaving green aliens that are difficult to avoid because they move pretty fast. Fortunately, even a single stroke with a baby heat knife dispatches these enemies. Rounding out the list are various sizes of creatures that look like plump Tyrannosaurus rexes. Some of these shoot back, others make a fast beeline straight for Bashi, and all are dangerous. Some of these even change form, although there is plenty of warning, and they are especially vulnerable to a few well-placed shots while metamorphosing. In the upper levels, there are a whole host of additional creatures too numerous to mention. As with many games of this type, at the end of each level there is a "queen," a very tough adversary, to kill. If you are



Bashi Bazook leads you through five levels of caverns, each filled with loads and loads of morphoids for you to defeat.

not up to the task, you lose one of your lives—but the game then lets you go on to see the next level, even though you didn't kill the queen. This is admirable, since you get to see the first few levels, until you run out of lives.

The touch of all enemies robs Bashi of some of his life force, which is recorded in a meter at the top of the screen. Life force can be gained back by slaying some creatures and running over the token left behind. There is also a hotel on some levels, where Bashi can use $80 to regain all his strength. Money is all important: It must be used for weapons, ammunition, hotels and at the stores. Cash can be gained by running over tokens left behind by vanquished foes as well, but Bashi can only carry $999, hardly enough once the going gets tough. To aid in the quest, there are various items



Instead of the standard level-ending "boss," *Bashi Bazook* features challenging "queens" at the end of each area.

which provide extra abilities. Injectors increase Bashi's life force, infrared goggles let him see in the dark (very helpful in Level 2) and the mental shield reduces the amount of damage done to Bashi by the morphoids.

You guide Bashi with the control pad, making him run and jump, duck and use whatever weapon he happens to be carrying. He starts out with a small heat knife, which isn't very powerful but is self-contained—that is, it doesn't need any ammunition. This weapon can be upgraded to a higher strength heat knife, spud gun, smart bomb, laser disk (like a killer Frisbee) or a protection bolo (a special

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shield which protects Bashi and kills his enemies at the same time). There is also the awesome Thundersword. The Thundersword can only be found in Area 4, but can kill just about any adversary and do serious damage to the powerful "queens" that await at the end of each level. The upgrade weapons can be found in special shops on each level and must be purchased with funds which Bashi finds along the way.

Except for the heat knife, all the weapons cost money each time they are fired, causing Bashi to run out of money awfully fast. Still, the powerful weapons are necessary to deal with some opponents along the way.

The graphics and animation in *Bashi Bazook* are adequate. Some of the scenes are very good (check out the hotel). Animation tends to be pretty spasmodic, and if more than two or three morphoids are on the screen (which is quite often), everything slows down to a crawl. This constant changing in speed tends to break the rhythm of play and is annoying. The best thing about *Bashi Bazook* is that it is quite playable—at least in the early levels; it is easy enough for even an novice to have a good time.

—David Plotkin

Jaleco, 5617 W. Howard,
Niles, IL 60648; (312) 647-7077.

The Three Stooges

Activision

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($42.95)

I never much liked the Three Stooges in the movies, never caring for their brand of slapstick humor. But packaged as a video game, this offering is quite delightful, replete as it is with excellent graphics and sound.

The object of the game, as explained in the opening sequence, is for our heroes, Larry, Curly and Moe, to earn enough money in thirty days to keep the orphanage open. It seems that the evil banker is going to foreclose and put all those poor orphans out on the street. It takes $5,000 to keep a roof over all those little heads, more money will help with repairs. If you manage to earn $20,000, the Stooges even get to marry the widow's three lovely daughters.

The game consists of a series of contests in which the Stooges try to earn the money. Each contest begins with a screen where a series of boxes show various pictures. A hand moves around, pointing to each box in turn. You must press one of the buttons when the hand is resting over the contest you want to play. This is not as easy as it sounds because the hand moves quickly, and you have a limited time to choose a box. Some of the boxes show pictures of mousetraps: If you accidently choose a mousetrap, it snaps on one of the hand's fingers. If you get snapped four times, the game is over. Each time you have to select a contest, the arrangement of the squares and the contests available are different.

The contests themselves are varied, with the easier ones earning you less money. You want to stay away from the banker square, which may lose you money. The safe square gets you easy money, as does the money square. As you can imagine, the question mark square either gets you money or makes you pay a visit to the banker. From here, things get interesting. The crackers square has you participating in a cracker-eating contest.

The silliness of this contest is pretty much reflected throughout this game. In the cracker-eating contest, for example, you begin with

All the slapstick comedy of the *Three Stooges* films also comes through in the Activision video game.

an excellent shot of Curly, seated in front of a big bowl of soup. Pressing the fire button changes the perspective to an overhead view of the soup with crackers floating in it. Your joystick guides Curly's spoon, and pressing the fire button makes him dip the spoon into the soup. He gets money for each cracker he manages to eat. The contest is complicated by the fact that some of the crackers float up and then are snatched up by clams in the chowder. It is fairly difficult to capture a cracker, and Curly lets out his characteristic (digitized) screech when he misses or time is up.

If you choose the waiter's square, the Stooges play waiters at the "Hoity Toity" club, where they sit facing three overdressed members who are demanding pies, *right now*. Of course, our heroes have to throw the pies at them, and they get money for each hit. The members throw the pies back, and a rather complex series of joystick maneuvers are required to make each Stooge duck: You lose money each time one of them is hit with a pie.

Then there is the doctor game. The Stooges run through a hospital, getting money for each second they remain, as well as bonuses for picking up supplies (they look like small red crosses) that fall off the orderlies' trays. Various patients on crutches, gurnies and wheelchairs get in the way, which costs you time if you run into them. It is, however, very amusing to do so. Also, there is a trivia game, where you answer questions about the trio, and a strange boxing game, where you must negotiate an obstacle course to retrieve a radio before one of the Stooges has gone six rounds in the boxing ring.

The wildest of the games occurs when you choose the Stooges square. This game doesn't actually earn you any money, but it slows the speed of the hand which moves over the squares, making it easier to select the game you want to play. In the Stooges game, you control Moe as he goes through the classic maneuvers with Curly and Larry—kicking, poking them in the eyes, slapping and punching. This sequence is made all the more hilarious by the digitized sound and comical expressions on their faces.

Three Stooges is an amusing game, with excellent sound and graphics, and it isn't too difficult to save the orphanage—although it is quite difficult to net the widow's three lovely daughters. Try it—nyuk, nyuk, nyuk!

—David Plotkin

Activision, 3885 Bohannon Drive,
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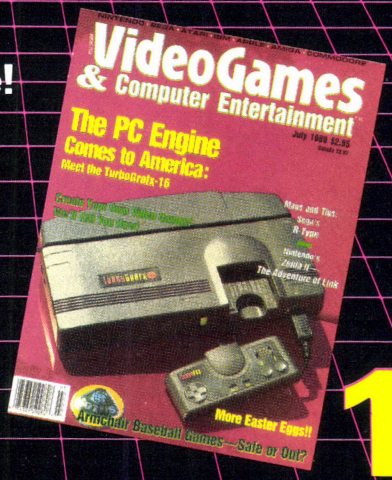

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Now that Master Higgins is deep into the island of mutant animals, he has only you to rely on for his survival. You can get him through this, can't you? This second part of our comprehensive guide to *Adventure Island* will help you take him to the end where he'll save his sweetheart, the Princess Leilani—or is her name Tina? (The instruction booklet says Leilani; the last screens say Tina.)

Adventure Island

Strategy Guide, Part II

by Bissy and Andy Eddy

More General Hints

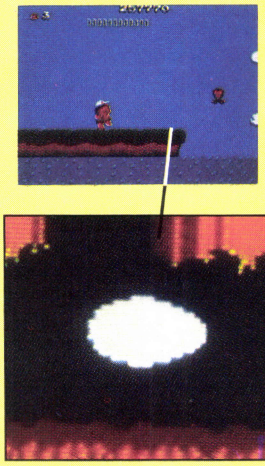
- It's easy to find hidden eggs and bonus levels by shooting ahead of Higgins. When your ax or fireball disappears in midair, you'll find your invisible reward.
- Speaking of shooting ahead: If you are having trouble with a certain area, you might find some benefit to tossing some shots in front of Higgins. This may very well clear out an obstacle down the road before you get to it. Listen for the telltale sound of a creature being hit offscreen.

  Then again, if you happen to hit an egg containing an eggplant, this nasty will fly into view and latch onto you.
- While on the subject of eggplants, they don't let go of Higgins until he is down to two power points. If you have an eggplant on board and come up to a milk bottle, don't pick up the bottle until the eggplant lets go. Otherwise, he'll take away all the precious power points the milk gives you.
- Each successive area boss requires more hits to get rid of him and also decreases the distance he tosses his fireballs.
- A hidden egg contains different items depending on what your weaponry is when you get it. Also, it seems that you can only get one red milk bottle at a time: Successive eggs containing red milk bottles are often replaced with rings.
- Snakes will shoot more venom at you when you have axes than if you have fireballs or no shooting power at all. If you are good with your jumping, you may want to pass up shooting power for some sections.

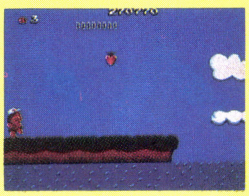
Correction

As you may have noticed in Part I, the picture of Basser in our Creature List incorrectly showed a bunch of bananas. Whoops!

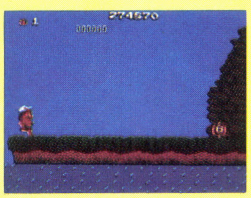
AREA 5



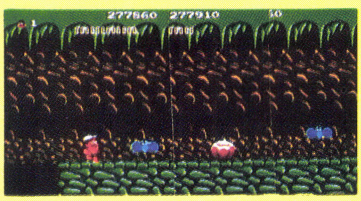
In Area 5, Round 1, Section 1: There's a hidden egg here that reveals a key. If you grab this key and get on the last cloud platform, it will boost you up to a bonus level.



In Area 5, Round 1, Section 3: Before the end of this island there is a hidden egg after the frogs. If you shoot ahead, you'll get some of the octs out of your way.



In Area 5, Round 1, Section 4: Right before the goal marker, there is a hidden egg.

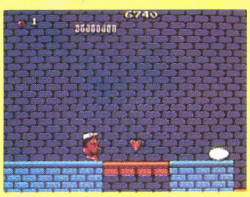


In Area 5, Round 2, Section 1: When you vault over the canyon, first kill the bat, then wait for the boulder to come before proceeding. Of course, this isn't a concern if you have fireball shooting power.

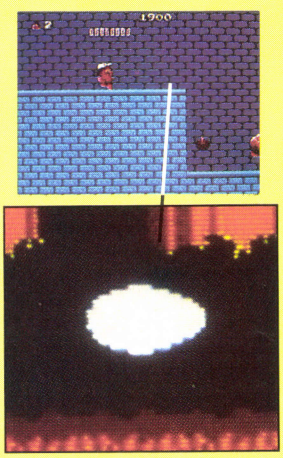
In Area 5, Round 2, Section 2: This one is difficult if you don't have fireballs. You must jump and fire axes to kill the snakes. The pattern of the rock wall under your feet will come in handy: After you kill the first snake, stand over the third line of rocks from the left and make a jump shot. This will clear the second snake.

In Area 5, Round 2, Section 2: Jump here and shoot ahead to hit the skeleton on the next platform. (Listen for the ping.) Quickly leap to the falling platform and jump again to safe ground.

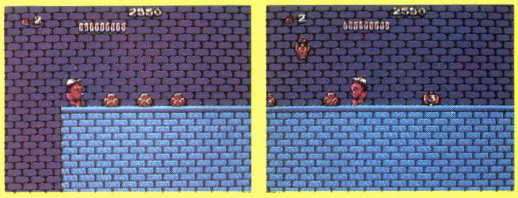
In Area 5, Round 3, Section 1: Careful—this egg contains an eggplant, so watch out for stray shots that may release him from his shell.



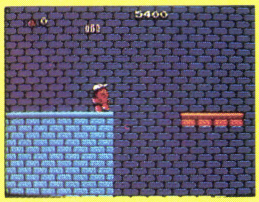
In Area 5, Round 3, Section 2: This visible egg contains a skateboard, if you have shooting power. Jump over it or kick it off the cliff, because the skateboard makes controlling Higgins on the moving platforms difficult.



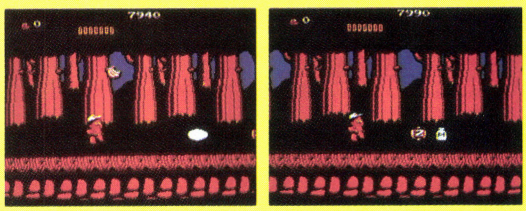
In Area 5, Round 3, Section 2: This egg gives you firepower, if you don't already have it.



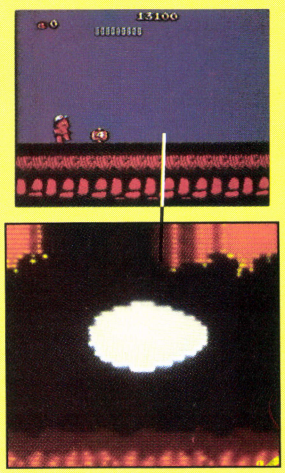
In Area 5, Round 3, Section 2: When you come upon this trio of rocks, the middle one reveals a pot.



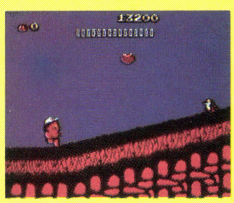
In Area 5, Round 3, Section 4: Each platform here will drop out beneath you. You must constantly run forward with the "B" button down, jumping at the end of each platform, to survive.



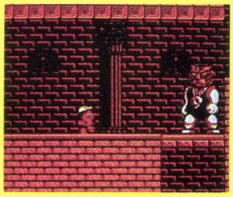
In Area 5, Round 4, Section 1: This egg will be a point-doubling flower if you jump on it; if you kick it or run into it, it will bring a white milk bottle. Have you noticed that in every area, Round 4 has an egg like this?



In Area 5, Round 4, Section 4: If you come into this area *without* shooting power, this egg will have a milk bottle in it.



In Area 5, Round 4, Section 4: The frog here can be eliminated by jumping and shooting before you get to him. Otherwise, you'll need a carefully timed jump to clear him on the incline.

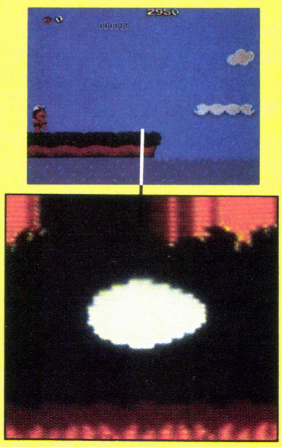


This is the Area 5 Boss.

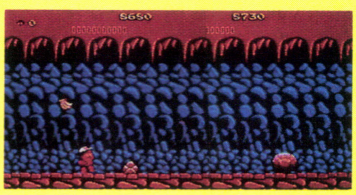
AREA 6

In Area 6, Round 1, Section 1: Precision jumping becomes more important from here on. You won't get shooting power restored, if you've lost it to this point, until Section 3.

You must make this large jump *without* hitting the egg, because it contains an eggplant. Leap right at the end of the starting platform, then when you touch down on the next island, immediately jump again. Otherwise, you'll kick the egg and take an unwanted guest with you.

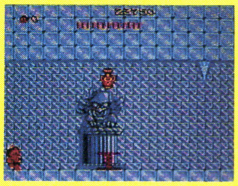


In Area 6, Round 1, Section 3: Here's another helpful hidden egg.



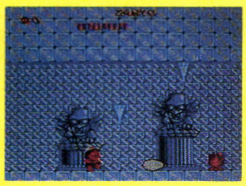
In Area 6, Round 2, Section 1: There's a hidden bonus level after the rock. Be careful to hurdle over the oncoming boulder first, because you can be killed while you are rising up on the bonus elevator.

In Area 6, Round 2, Section 2: Before you jump to the falling platform, uncover this hidden egg.

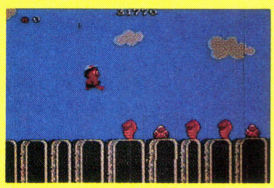


In Area 6, Round 2, Section 3: There are many more icicles here than you have encountered before. Watch your step!

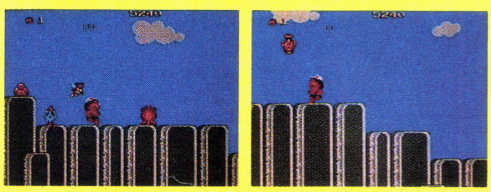
Keep your eyes open for a boulder when you reach the spring. After the boulder rolls by, jump on the spring *twice*: The first jump resets the spring into a down position.



In Area 6, Round 2, Section 3: Shortly after the spring, there will be an egg that lies in your path containing an eggplant. These little menaces are becoming more frequent, aren't they?

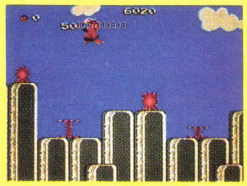


In Area 6, Round 3, Section 2: There's a ton of things to shoot at here, but concentrate on the snakes first. After the snakes are cleared, take on the pooters that stroll by. The time that passes while you wipe out these enemies takes its toll on your power points.

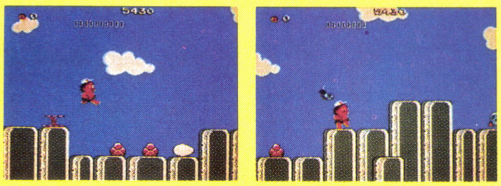


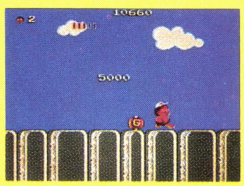
In Area 6, Round 3, Section 3: When you get to the egg with the honeygirl in it, run extremely fast to get to this fire. If you hit this blaze with invincibility, you'll reveal a pot. If the honeygirl leaves your side before you reach the fire—well, you know what happens, don't you?

In Area 6, Round 3, Section 3: After you get the pot, hold back on random shooting, because there is an eggplant coming up in the next egg. Getting past the bats before the eggplant requires careful shooting or well-timed bounds.

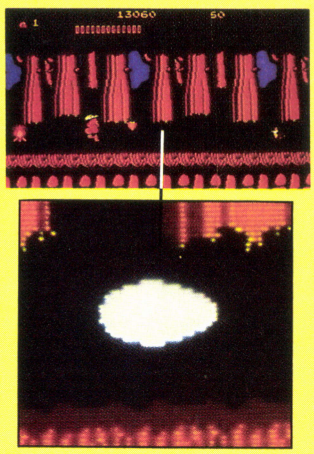


In Area 6, Round 3, Section 4: Here are some springs that help you get to the next visible egg, which contains milk. Use the same vaulting technique to get from spring to spring as you would in a bonus level.

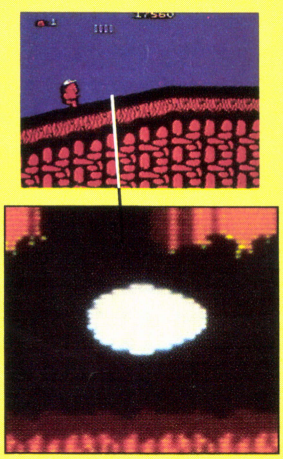




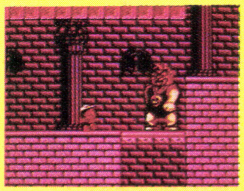
In Area 6, Round 3, Section 4: This egg also contains an eggplant, but if you carry it to the goal, you'll get 5,000 points.



In Area 6, Round 4, Section 2: Just before you take on the upcoming six frogs, you'll find a hidden egg to assist you.

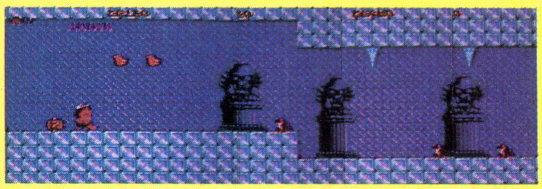


In Area 6, Round 4, Section 4: On this incline, you can find a hidden egg.

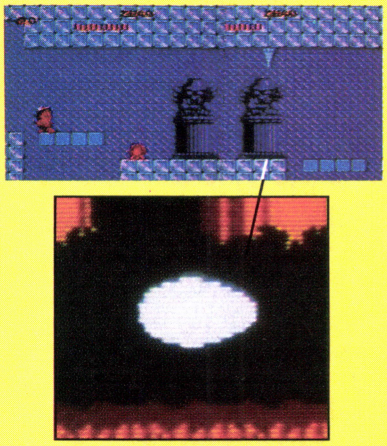


Here's the Area 6 Boss.

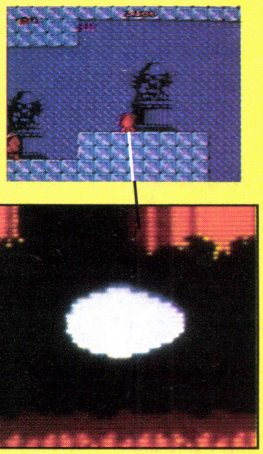
AREA 7



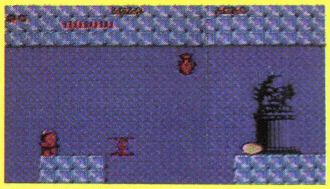
In Area 7, Round 1, Section 2: In order to save some energy points, you can hold down the "B" button and run past all three frogs. Slow down quickly after the third frog or else you'll run into a campfire.



In Area 7, Round 1, Section 2: The hidden egg will give you firepower if you have axes; otherwise, it will contain a milk bottle or a ring.

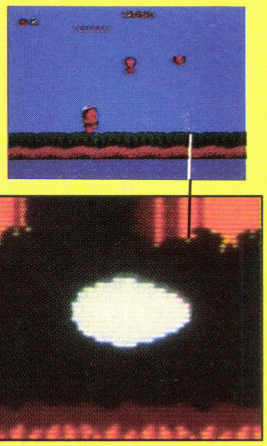


In Area 7, Round 1, Section 3: Another egg is hidden here which usually gives milk, though getting a 2,000-point ring isn't out of the question.

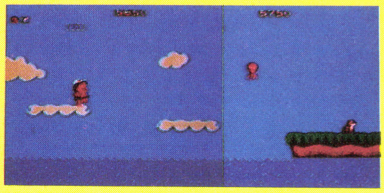


In Area 7, Round 1, Section 3: When you come to this spring, don't expect to bounce right across. You have to reset the spring by jumping on it once, then jump on it again to get the boost. Also, be careful of the egg on the other side—it's another nasty eggplant.

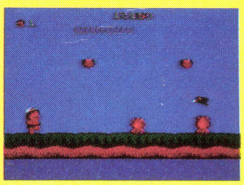
If you try for the pot, slow down before you get to the icicle that will try to drop on Higgins' head.



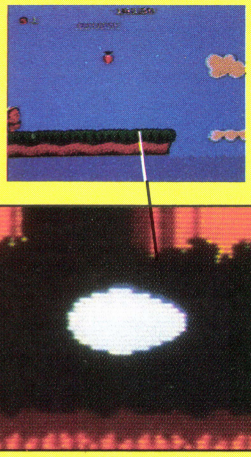
In Area 7, Round 2, Section 1: On this island, you'll find another invisible egg.



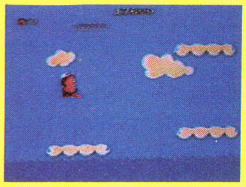
In Area 7, Round 2, Section 1: It's best to stay on the edge of this platform and shoot ahead to kill the oct. Take extra care because the platform before the oct drops out, and the island ahead contains a frog. Outrun him with a "B" button speed burst, but watch out for other beasts in front of you.



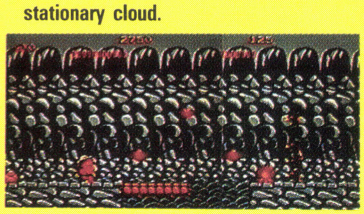
In Area 7, Round 2, Section 2: When you come upon these two fires, jump between them first and take on the birds that fly by before going ahead with your journey.



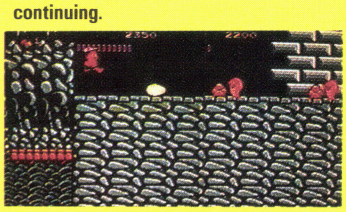
In Area 7, Round 2, Section 3: After the three frogs, you'll find another hidden egg.



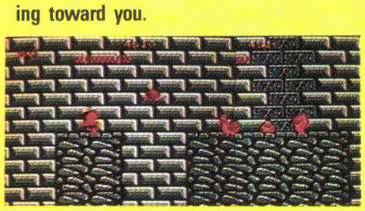
In Area 7, Round 2, Section 4: Stop for a second and check out the pattern of the moving platforms—though you should use your pause to minimize the decrease of your power points. There are two closely spaced clouds, followed by a gap before the next pair. If you jump to the right onto the lower cloud of the two, then bounce immediately straight up, you can easily leap over to the next stationary cloud.



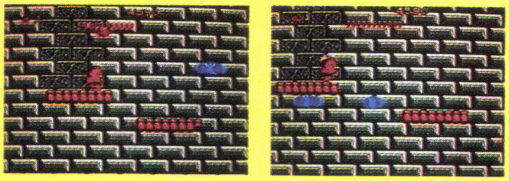
In Area 7, Round 3, Section 1: When you reach this platform, first shoot the many birds that come through before continuing.



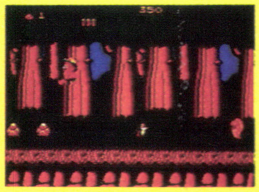
In Area 7, Round 3, Section 2: This is the same as the snakes in 5-2, except you'll encounter an extra boulder coming toward you.



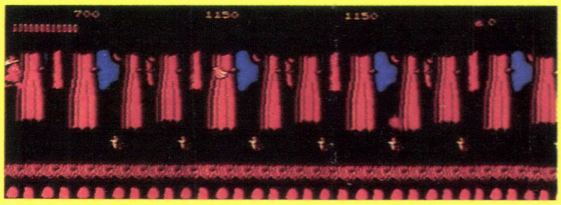
In Area 7, Round 3, Section 3: If you stand where Higgins is in this picture and jump shoot, you can easily take out the snail and snake from a distance. Don't jump over yet; move to the right side of the platform, and let the boulder clear out. This will leave only a single rock in your way.



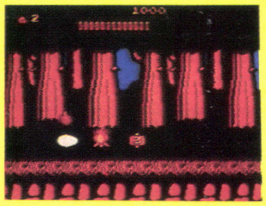
In Area 7, Round 3, Section 4: Once you get to the moving platforms with the bats above, you should move the right edge of the platforms to get both bats to fly toward you. This will save you some power points.



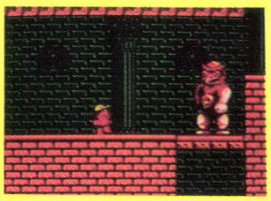
In Area 7, Round 4, Section 1: This is another frog that you have to outrun. Again, use the "B" button to get past.



In Area 7, Round 4, Section 2: Here are *seven* frogs in a row to get by. The last frog is green, so he won't trouble you. Time your jumps, landing where the last frog was before he sprung at you.

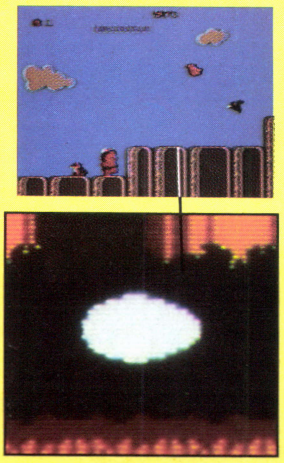


In Area 7, Round 4, Section 2: This visible egg contains an eggplant.

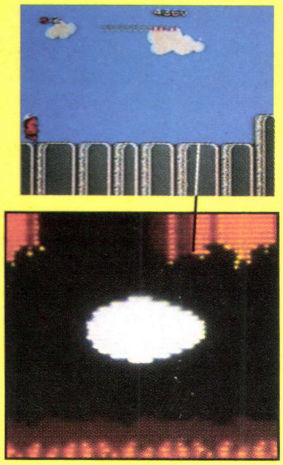


You've reached the Area 7 Boss. Last area coming up!

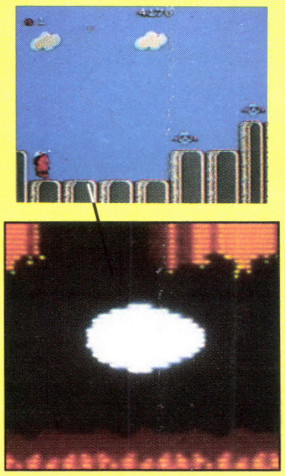
AREA 8



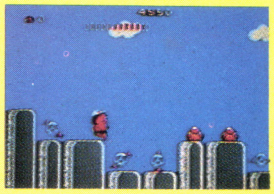
In Area 8, Round 1, Section 1: After the frog jumps over you, which will happen when you move right against the wall, you'll find a hidden egg.



In Area 8, Round 1, Section 2: Before you need to make your next jump, keep an eye out for another hidden egg on the platform.



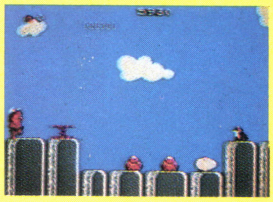
In Area 8, Round 1, Section 3: This small gulley holds another hidden egg.



In Area 8, Round 1, Section 3: The second rock has a pot in it, but it is difficult to get safely.

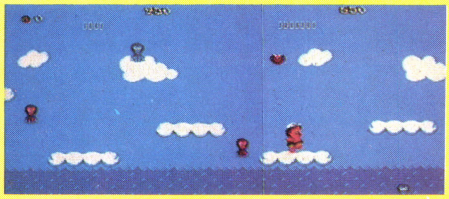
In Area 8, Round 1, Section 3: You'll be thankful that you've found a bonus level here, because it will boost up your power points and take you past some of the hazards that lie ahead. Don't stray too far from the entrance to this bonus level: Bats will attack you from the right or a boulder will tumble in from the left.

In Area 8, Round 1, Section 3: If you don't get to the bonus level, you'll find an egg here that has an eggplant in it. If you try to shoot the bats that preceed it, you may open this dangerous egg.

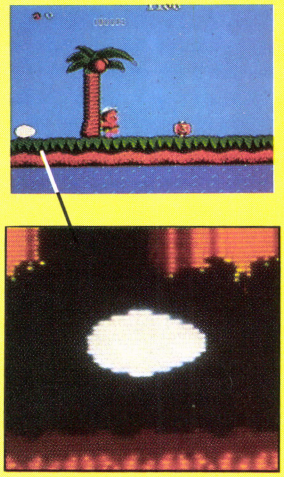


In Area 8, Round 1, Section 4: Another eggplant to contend with. You have a spring to take you over it, but watch out for that frog.

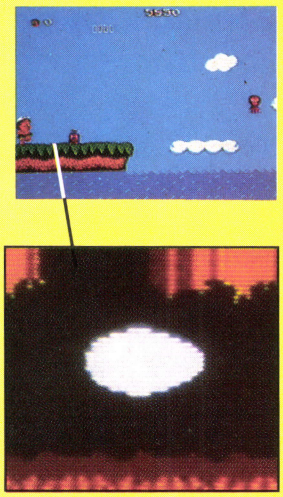
In Area 8, Round 2, Section 1: This is a picture of the many octs and walers that clutter up your path in this section.



In Area 8, Round 2, Section 2: A very well-timed jump is needed here—simple, right? But in comes the waler to ruin your nice plans and get in your way. The second platform in the picture falls out, so you have to quickly jump on and off that one, then hit the next platform at the extreme-left side and leap straight up, or else the fish will have you for dinner.

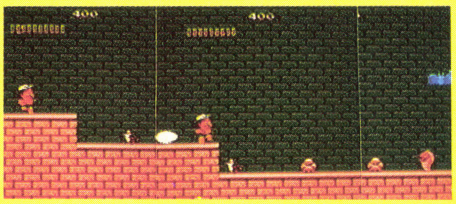


In Area 8, Round 2, Section 2: Yet another hidden egg.

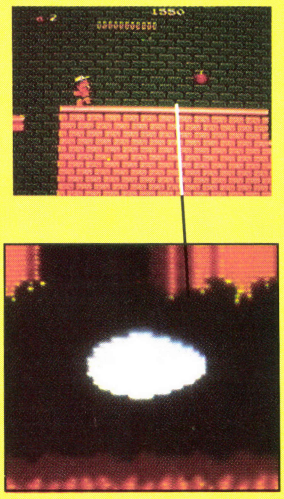


In Area 8, Round 2, Section 4: The second hidden egg will hopefully boost your power points to the end of this round.

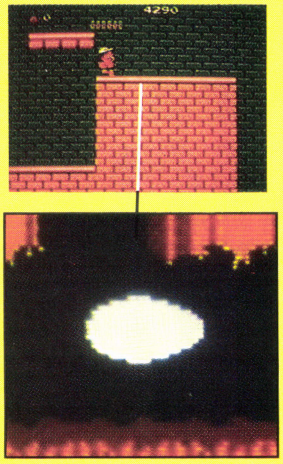
In Area 8, Round 2, Section 4: Octs and a moving platform will prove quite a challenge to you. Jump quickly when the two red octs drop down *with* the platform, and you'll be relatively safe.



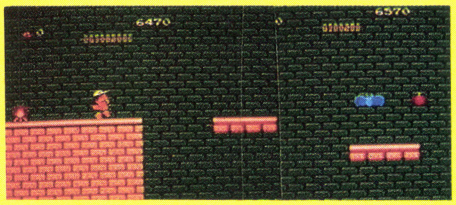
In Area 8, Round 3, Section 1: This egg opens to another power-draining eggplant. Bound over the egg, then take a jump shot to kill the snake. Follow that by leaping over the frog and prepare for the upcoming bats.



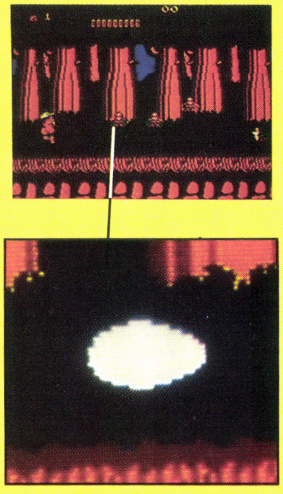
In Area 8, Round 3, Section 2: The egg here has firepower, if you have ax power.



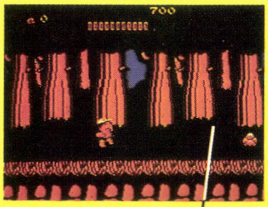
In Area 8, Round 3, Section 2: If you get firepower with the last egg, you'll get a power boost here from a red milk bottle.

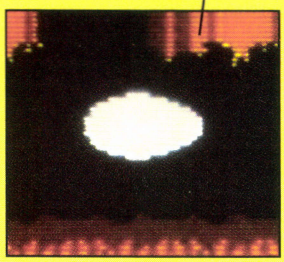


In Area 8, Round 3, Section 4: The platforms after this fire look easy, but are guarded by some bats. You must run with your "B" button and shoot when you see a Basser coming. This is difficult, but can be done.

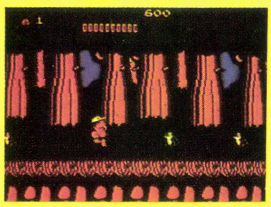


In Area 8, Round 4, Section 1: You've reached the last round of the game, but there is still much to be conquered. Your first encounter will be these spiders and a frog. If you jump very close to the first spider, you'll get an egg with a red milk bottle in it. When you jump over these two spiders, immediately spring up again to get past the frog that will be coming toward you.

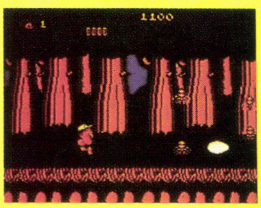


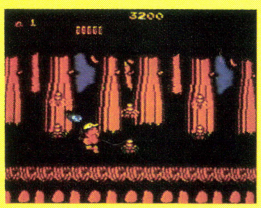


In Area 8, Round 4, Section 2: This hidden egg contains a ring (if you got the red milk bottle in the last hint and haven't died).

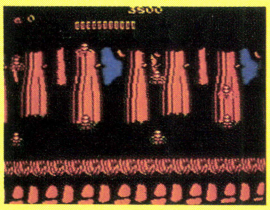


In Area 8, Round 4, Section 3: When you get to this green frog, you'll wonder how to get past it without dying at the hands of the brown frog. If you "B" button it and jump just before the green Kello, you'll clear both hazards.

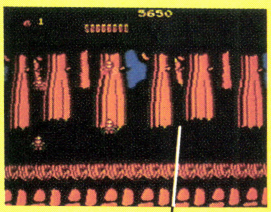


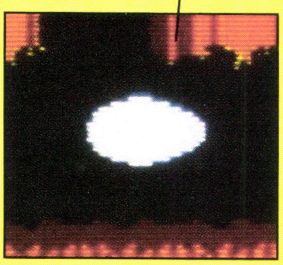


In Area 8, Round 4, Section 3: Here's a real nasty eggplant. You can get around him with absolutely perfect leaps, but it's extremely difficult.

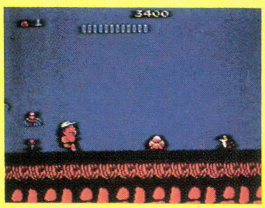


In Area 8, Round 4, Section 3: The most difficult part to this level is getting past these four pairs of spiders. Jumping over the first set, between the second set, over the third set and between the fourth set is the preferred method, but the tight spacing of the last coupling requires perfection. If you go to the far left (without running into the third set) of the fourth pair and run full speed when the top spider starts his climb, you can jump through them. Make sure you start your vault as close to the lower spider as possible without hitting him.

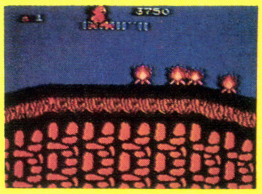




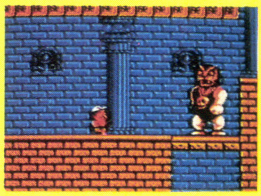
In Area 8, Round 4, Section 3: This hidden egg is a great place to recharge after the eggplant saps your strength. Unfortunately, this egg will be a ring if you already received a milk bottle with this Higgins. If that is the case, you'll first get angry and then have to tackle the four sets of spiders again. Practice makes perfect, and you'll have lots of chances for practice here.



In Area 8, Round 4, Section 3: The red flower signals a coyote on the loose. Seeing the rock and frog so close together means another "B" button leap over both obstacles. Then you can easily bounce over the coyote.



In Area 8, Round 4, Section 4: You've come this far, but can you take the heat? You'd better because you've got a heap of heat here. You can't jump over all four fires, so make tiny jumps to the safe spots between them.



You've done it . . . you've reached the Area 8 Boss!

You've helped Higgins save Princess What's-Her-Name—she must've changed her name to Tina while she was kidnapped.

A Big Handshake

Take a look at those blisters on your fingers—you've earned them. But in your travels, you may have found something that we've missed. That's the fun of a game like *Adventure Island*: The hidden bonuses are everywhere. Keep on digging for new discoveries around Higgins' island hideaway, but try not to get a sunburn.

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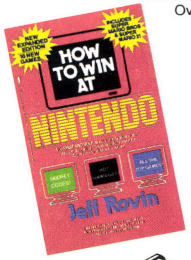

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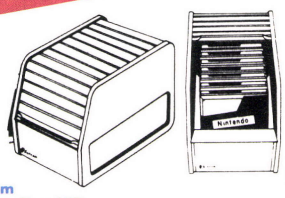

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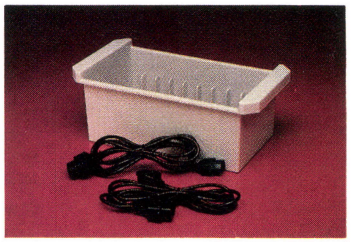

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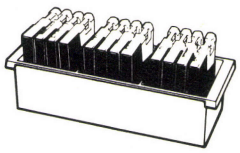

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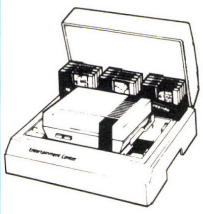

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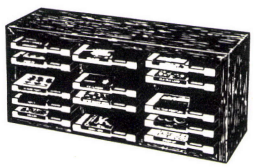

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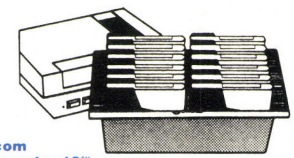

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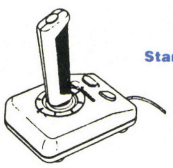

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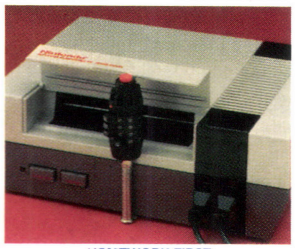

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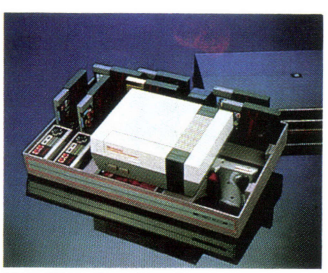

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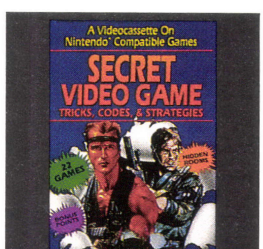

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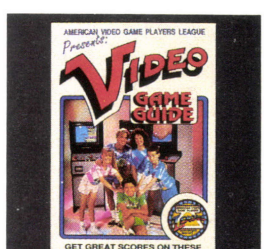

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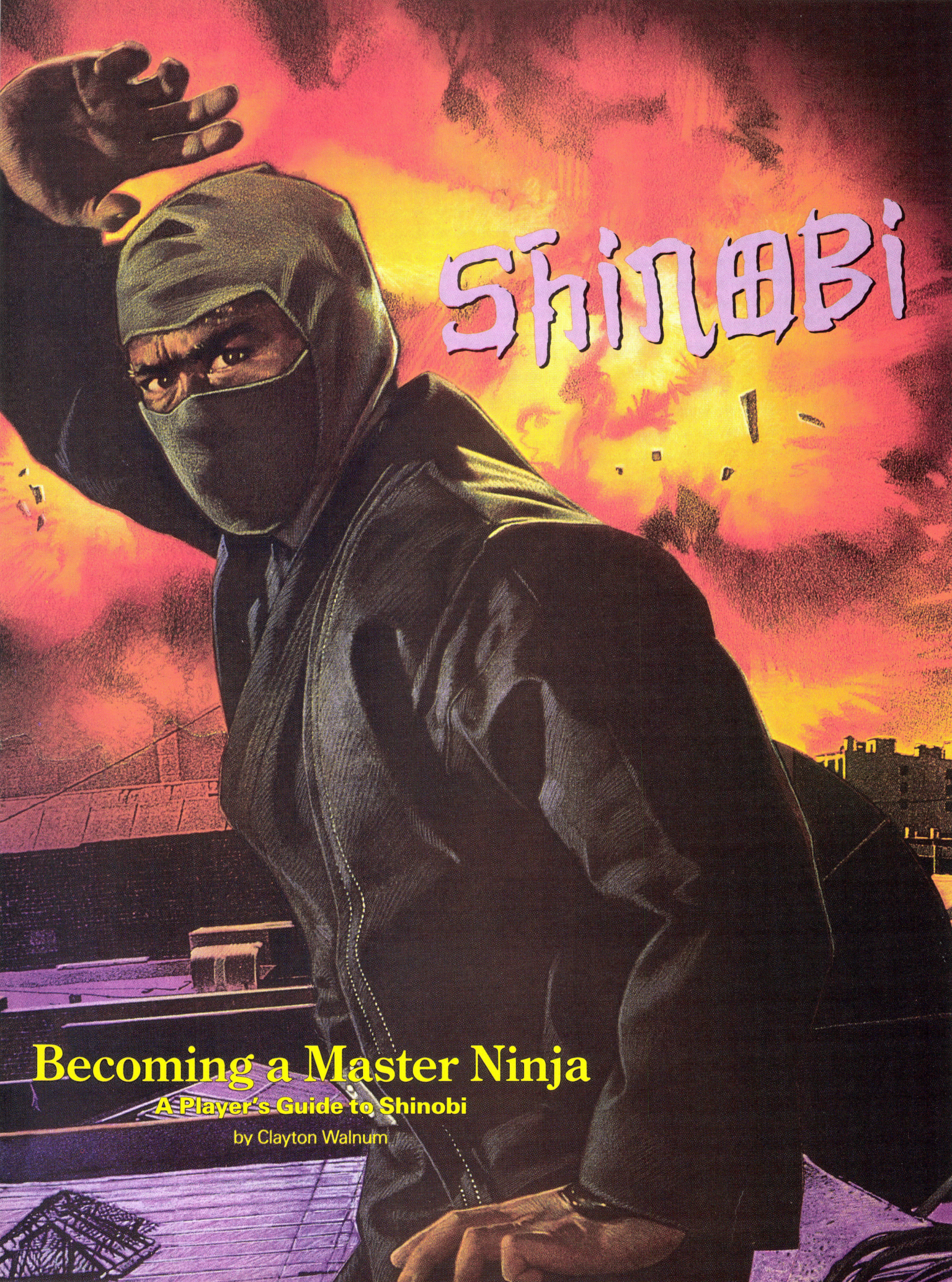


Becoming a Master Ninja

A Player's Guide to Shinobi

by Clayton Walnum

Looks like there's big trouble! A terrorist group known as the Ring of Five, led by five evil ninjas, has kidnapped the children of all the world's leaders. The children are now being held captive, and only Joe Musashi, the Master Ninja, has the power to rescue them and destroy the Ring of Five.

In the persona of Joe Musashi, you must complete five deadly missions and make it through 15 stages of battle. To aid you in your fight, you will find swords, nunchaku, chains, bombs and other weapons. You will also get a chance to earn powerful ninja magic, which helps increase your odds of defeating the enemy unscathed.

Will you prove worthy of the trust the world's leaders have placed in you?

The Basic Moves

Shinobi is not unlike most fighting games available on the Sega and other systems. What lifts it a step above the rest is its uncomplicated and easy-to-learn controls. It doesn't take hours of practice to master the necessary fighting techniques.

However, even though the game is easy to learn, many special moves are required as you battle your way through the different levels. Although each level has its own secrets, most of the techniques you'll develop early in the game will prove helpful throughout.

Practice leaping over weapons that have been thrown at you. There are many places in the game where in order to get close enough to an enemy to shoot him, you must move into his range of fire.

Some of the stages have two walkways (one above the other) filled with enemies ready to shoot the second you appear. Learn to jump quickly between the walkways, crouching and firing the instant you land. This technique will allow you to defeat many enemies before they even manage to shoot.

Kicks are hard to master, but master them you must if you're to get by certain types of enemies, particularly the gunmen who are lying on their bellies.

Also, practice your horizontal jumps. There are some missions that require you to make long dangerous leaps—leaps that will leave you plunging to your death if not made successfully.

The jump shot is another move you should learn well. You'll need this skill to get by Ken Oh, the first leader of the Ring of Five. You'll need the same technique at various places throughout the game. Placing a shot accurately while you're falling through the air is not easy, but it's a skill that will be invaluable in your battle against the Ring of Five.

Ninja Magic

You are awarded ninja magic whenever you successfully complete a bonus stage. The bonus stage itself is much like a shooting gallery. There are two walkways on which enemy ninjas run back and forth. You must hit each of them with your shuriken before one gets close enough to kill you.

The best way to succeed at the bonus stage is to fire as fast as you can, moving your on-screen hand back and forth so as to sweep the scene with the shuriken. In this way you'll hit many of the ninjas just by luck.

Keep close watch on the enemy ninjas as they run past. Some of them will stop briefly then leap forward toward you. When they stop, get your on-screen hand lined up so that when the ninja jumps, you can immediately shoot him. You can't afford too many misses.

The bonus stage is difficult to complete, but don't despair. Ninja magic is not required in order to win at *Shinobi*. It comes in handy now and then, but if you learn the strategies for each stage, you'll find that you won't need the magic. (When I manage to win ninja magic, I hardly ever bother to use it.)

The Maps

The maps that follow contain many hints to help you with *Shinobi*. Areas of particular difficulty are noted, along with a suggested solution. Of course, there are many ways to get by a particular obstacle in a game, so don't be afraid to experiment and see if you can find better ways to do things.

Also, please remember that much of the fun of playing a game comes from discovering things on your own. Don't consult these maps unless you need to. Try to find your own ways of beating the Ring of Five. The game will be more rewarding if you put a little effort into it.

Good luck!

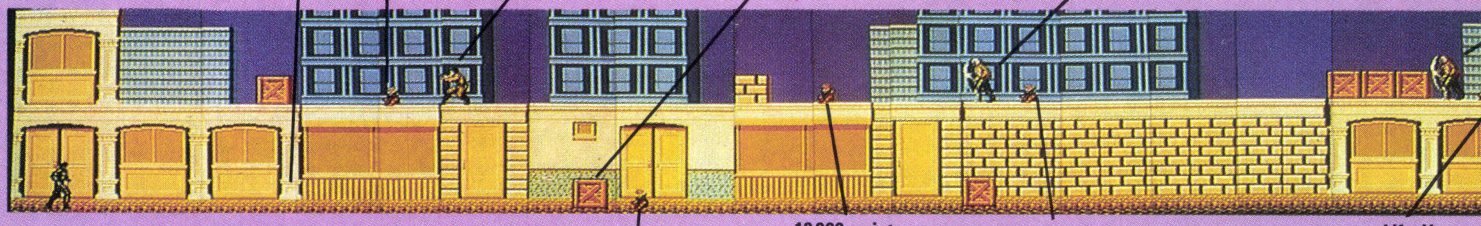
MISSION 1, STAGE 1

The thugs that come at you here are simple to beat: Just shoot.

To kill this gunman, simply jump up from below and fire from a crouch as soon as you land. He can't hit you as long as you stay beneath his fire.

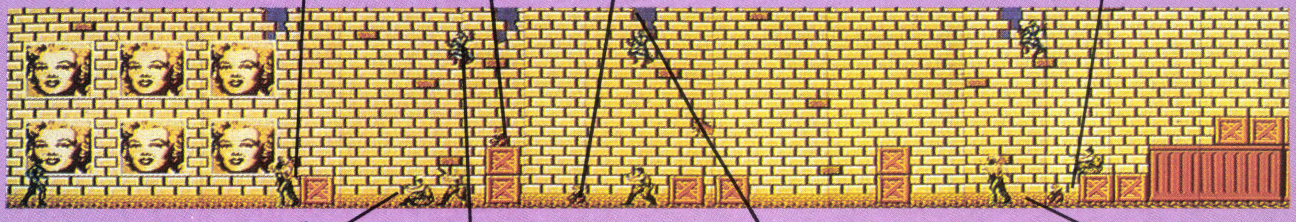
Crouch behind the crate. When the gunman fires, wait for his bullet to go over your head, then stand up, shoot and crouch again. He'll get off one more shot before you hit him, so make sure you duck fast.

Just as with the first gunman, this mongo can be taken care of easily from a crouch. Just remember: You can't shoot him until he throws his weapon.



MISSION 1, STAGE 2

Use the crouch technique to get this mongo.

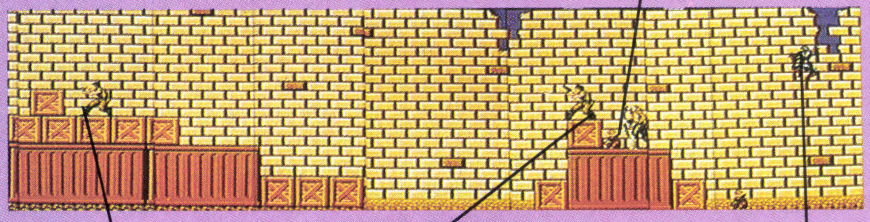


Getting these two gunmen can be tricky. Crawl over to the crate in front of them (walk while crouching), and as soon as their shots go over your head, quickly stand up, shoot and crouch back down. That'll take out the standing gunman. To get the crouching gunman, stand on the crate and, after his shot clears below you, jump in front of him, then crouch and shoot immediately.

Watch out for the fly ninja hanging on the wall. He'll drop down as soon as you get close enough. If you advance slowly, you should have time to shoot him before he swings into full battle.

The rest of the fly ninjas on this level can be shot before they have a chance to drop down on you. Just stand on the crates, jump and shoot.

Here's another tricky place. First, when the mongo's and the gunman's shots have cleared, drop down (from the crates) in front of the mongo and take him out from a crouch. To get the gunman, wait till he fires over your head, then quickly stand, fire and crouch.



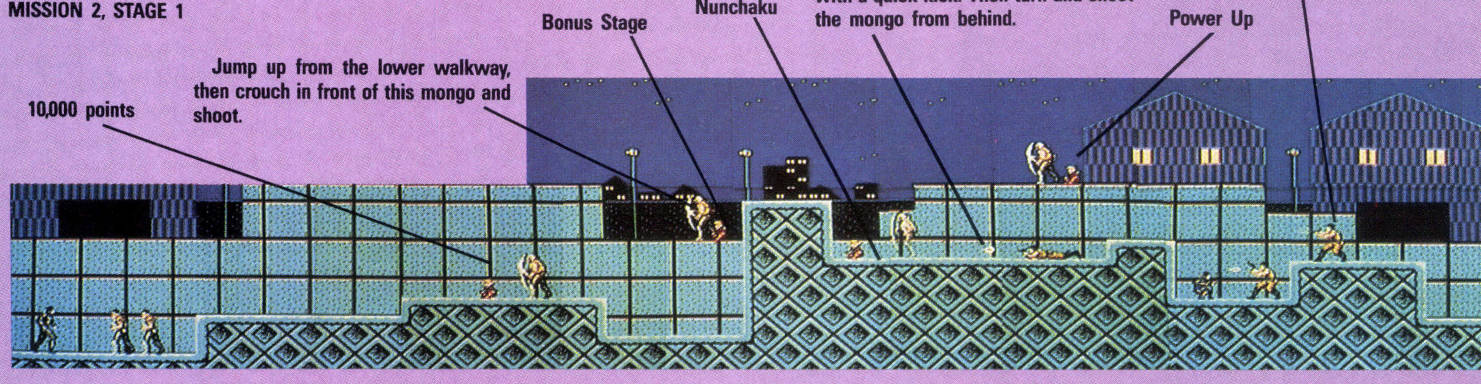
Because you have to jump up onto the crates, it's difficult to avoid this gunman's fire. It's just a matter of timing, though. Wait for him to fire, then, when the bullet goes over your head, jump up to the crate in front of him and crouch. After the next shot goes over your head, stand and take him out.

To do in this duo of bad guys also requires some good timing. Get up on the lower crate. When all shots have cleared, jump up and shoot the gunman; then do the same for the mongo.

Take this gunman by surprise by dropping down behind him from the upper walkway. Don't even bother with the gunman previous to this one.

This pair—the mongo and the gunman—are difficult to get without being hit. The best strategy is to drop down from the walkway above and land in front of the gunman, taking him out with a quick kick. Then turn and shoot the mongo from behind.

MISSION 2, STAGE 1

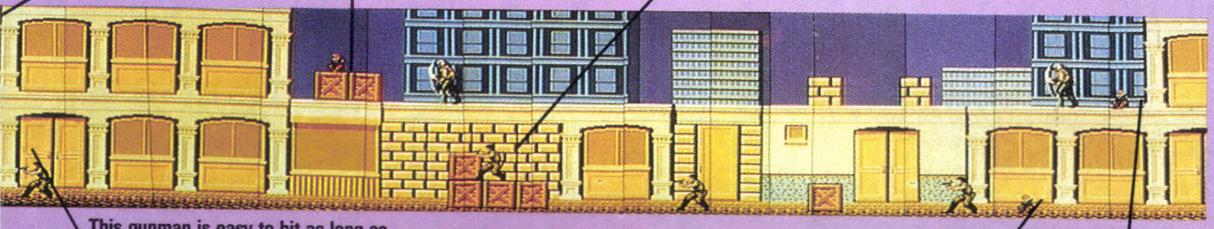


Fire over the crates until this mongo throws his weapon, then quickly crouch. Your shuriken will hit him while he's without his weapon and vulnerable.

Bonus Stage

Stand right next to the crates and fire. Your shuriken (or sword) will go through the crack between the crates and make short work of the gunman.

The easiest way to get this gunman is to drop down in front of him from the walkway above, crouch and fire. If you choose to climb over the crates instead, be ready to jump over his fire when he shoots.



This gunman is easy to hit as long as you crouch below his line of fire.

Life Max

10,000 points

It takes careful timing to get the gunman and the green ninja here. You need to drop down from the blocks immediately after the gunman fires, then kick him before he has a chance to fire again.

Stand on the blocks, and when the green ninja moves away, drop down next to him and immediately give him two quick kicks.

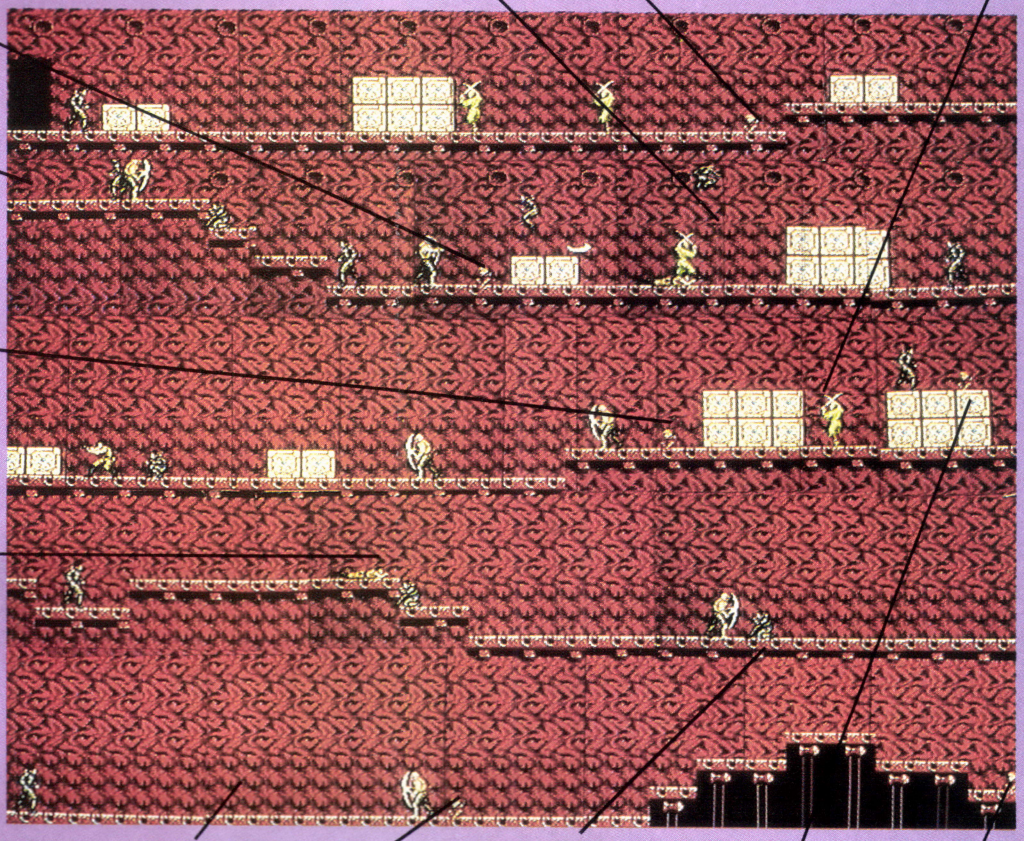
MISSION 2, STAGE 2

Nunchaku

Power Up

Sword

10,000 points



To get this gunman, stand on the lowest step so his shots go over your head. Then jump up and fire.

You'll meet your first green ninjas here. You can't shoot them standing up, and because they can block your shots with their swords, you need to shoot at their feet.

10,000 points

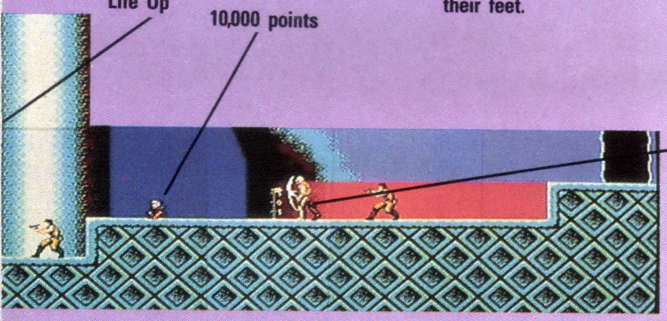
10,000 points

Life Max

Bonus Stage

Life Up

10,000 points



You'll need some jumping skills to get this mongo. When he throws his weapon at you, jump over it. Once you get the timing, fire and then jump. Your shot will hit him before he reclaims his weapon.

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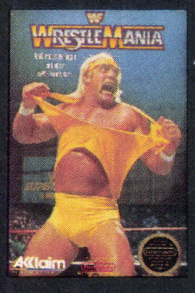

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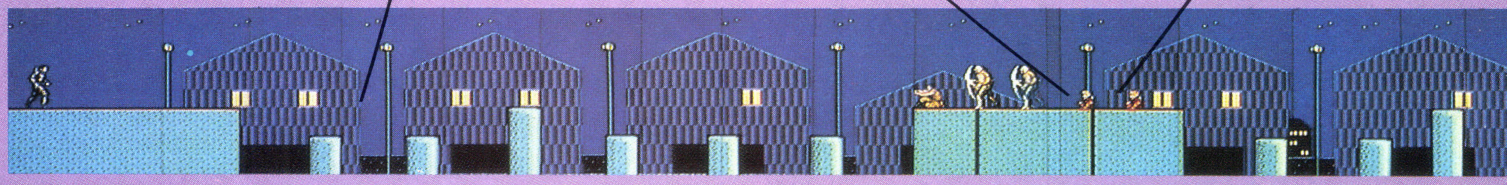
MISSION 2, STAGE 3

It's here that the frogmen will attack. They're easy to destroy; one shot will do it. But the first time they jump up at you can be a surprise! Be forewarned: Sometimes they attack in pairs.

Bonus Stage

Life Up

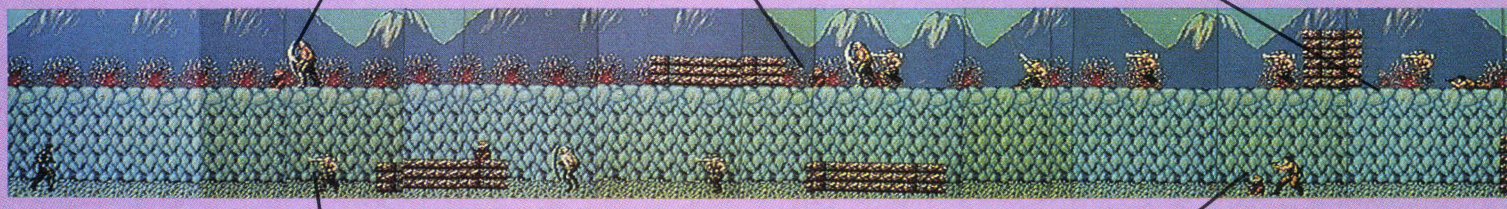


MISSION 3, STAGE 1

10,000 points

Bonus Stage

10,000 points



10,000 points

10,000 points

To get this gunman, move toward him while jumping over his shots. When you land right in front of him, squat and kick. This is a tough maneuver to accomplish without being hit once or twice.

Jump into the lower section of pipe in front of this gunman, timing your jump so that you leap over his shot. Hitting him is just a matter of waiting until his next shot passes over your head, jumping and shooting.

Wait until this mongo moves up close to the vertical pipe, then jump into position behind him, shooting him before he moves toward you.

MISSION 3, STAGE 2

Sword

Life Max

Chain

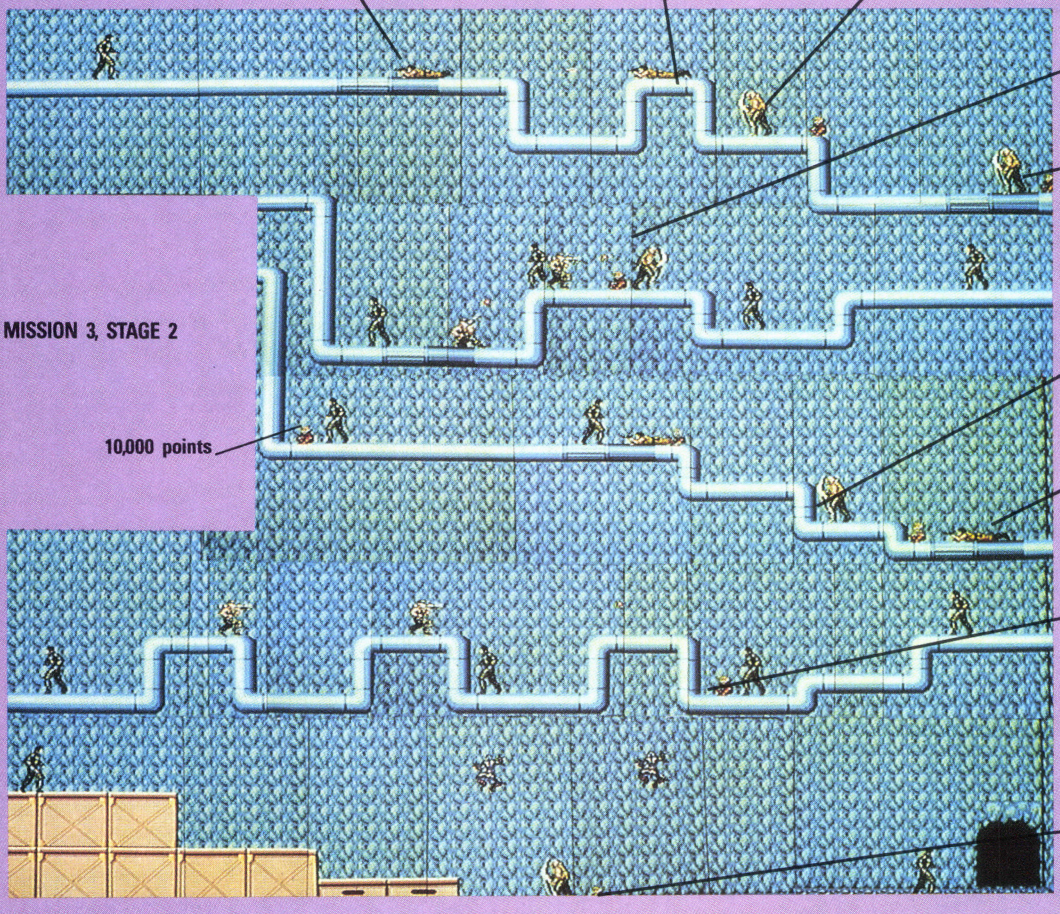
10,000 points

This gunman is difficult to take out without getting hit yourself. Try and time your jump so that you land directly in front of him the instant after he shoots. Then kick him immediately.

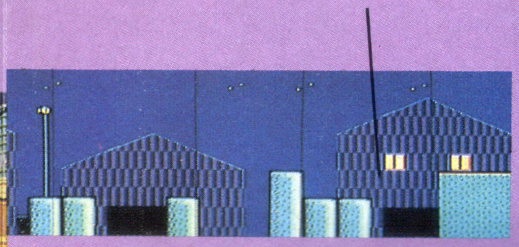
Bonus Stage

If you shoot these fly ninjas while you're still standing on the crates, you won't have to fight them later.

10,000 points

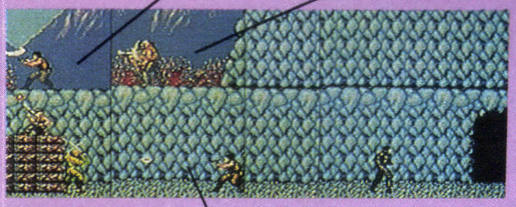


The jump from the piling to the wall here is difficult at first. But practice it well, because you'll need that jumping skill later on.



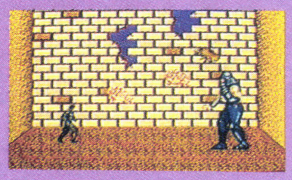
The gunmen and mongo here are easiest to get from behind.

Nunchaku



Here you'll run into the flying black ninjas again. They tend to leap toward where you're standing, but you can stay out of their way easily enough by moving in the opposite direction as soon as they jump. Shoot when they land on the ground, then, because it may take a couple of shots to get the job done, move back the other way. Once you get the rhythm, staying out of their way is easy.

MISSION 1, STAGE 3: KEN OH

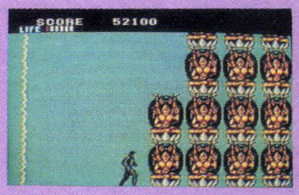


Beating Ken Oh may seem difficult at first. To harm him, you must hit him in the eyes. Because it's a "jump shot," you have to practice in order to get the timing and aim just right. Once you can hit him in the eyes with few misses, you'll be able to beat him.

MISSION 2, STAGE 4: BLACK TURTLE

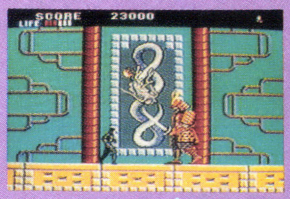
Flying black ninjas will jump out of the helicopter and attack you in groups. Their bouncing makes them tough targets, but, luckily, you don't need to bother with them. All you need to do is shoot the helicopter on its nose eight times. If you start firing as soon as it moves onto the screen, you should be able to hit it at least five times before the black ninjas even show up. After that, you have to stay out of the ninjas' way (not an easy task) in order to get the last few shots in.

MISSION 3, STAGE 4: MANDARA

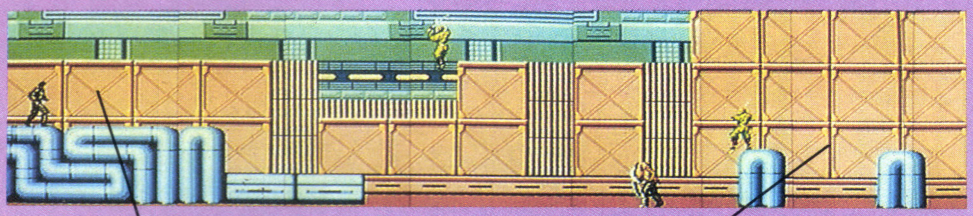


As the stacks of statues start moving toward you, get as close as possible and fire as fast as you can. Remember that you need to find the right rhythm. If you fire too fast, you'll have troubles with the fire button (it'll sometimes refuse to fire). On the other hand, if you fire too slowly, you'll never be able to blast all the statues before they force you into the force field. Once you defeat the statues, a giant face will appear on the wall and start bombarding you with fireballs. You have to shoot its red eye eight times. This stage is tough!

MISSION 4, STAGE 4: LOBSTER



Lobster is fairly easy to beat once you get the timing right. You have to hit him in the face eight times; that is possible only when his sword is down. Once you learn the speed at which he raises and lowers his sword, you'll be able to make accurate jump shots at his face. If you miss too many times, though, you'll get pressed up against the wall where Lobster can easily do you in. Fortunately, each time you hit him, he gets knocked back a little.

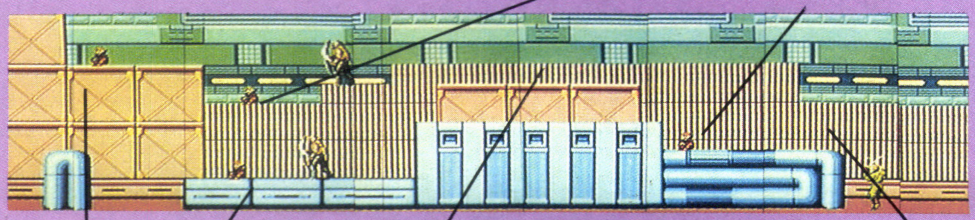


Two green ninjas will appear here. Fire two shots quickly at one of them, then turn immediately to shoot the other one. If you waste even a second, you'll get hit.

Get ready for two flying ninjas here. You'll need to have mastered your dodging techniques in order to defeat them in this tight space.

10,000 points

Power Up



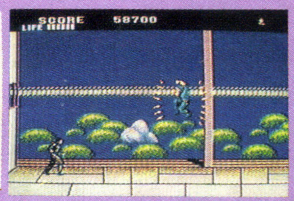
10,000 points

Nunchaku

You should move slowly forward until a green ninja appears. When he does, move back to give yourself room to fight. If you move forward too fast, you'll have both a green ninja and a flying ninja to fight at the same time. You'll want to avoid that!

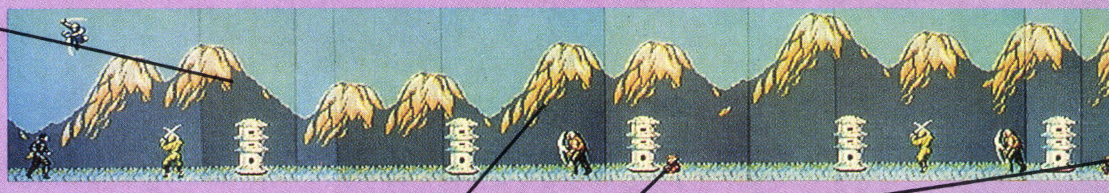
When the flying ninja appears here, back up to give yourself fighting room. Defeat the flying ninja before approaching the two green ninjas just ahead, or you'll be in for a tough battle.

MISSION 5, STAGE 4: MASKED NINJA



The Masked Ninja is a tough opponent because he changes into four different shapes. First, hit him three times, shooting when his "glow" goes out. Just as with some of the other "bosses," you'll have to master the timing, since his glow is off for only a brief moment. After that he'll change into a whirlwind. Kick him three times when he comes close, after which he'll change into a jumping ninja with a shadow that also attacks you. When he jumps, you jump too and hit him in the air. After three hits, he'll throw off all his disguises and attack again. Let him run past you, then turn and shoot him as fast as you can from a safe distance. When you defeat him this time, you will have won!

After defeating the first flying ninja and green ninja, jump on this pedestal. When the second flying ninja appears, jump backwards off the pedestal to give yourself fighting room. If you don't take on this flying ninja before jumping in on the other side of the pedestal, you'll have to fight two flying ninjas and one green ninja at the same time.

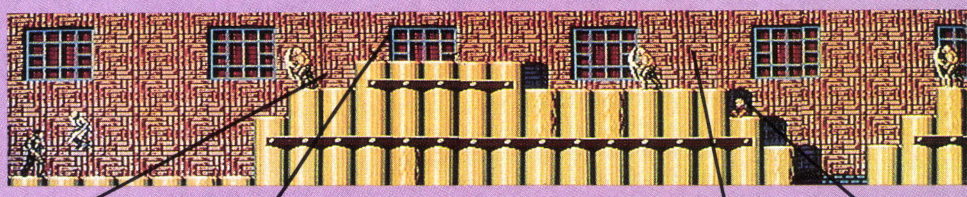


Be prepared for flying ninjas to suddenly attack almost everywhere along this level.

10,000 points

Nunchaku

MISSION 4, STAGE 2



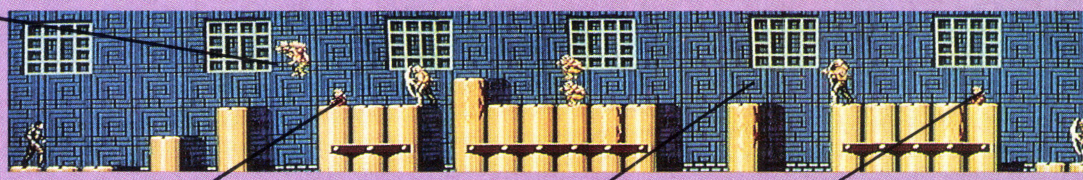
Shoot the first gunman from the first "step," and shoot the second from the next step.

Power Up

As you walk forward here, two flying ninjas will appear. If you back up a little, they'll jump off the screen without bothering you.

Sword

The ninjas on this level like to attack from both the front and behind. They especially like to attack when you're balanced precariously on a single pedestal, making it easy for them to push you to your death.



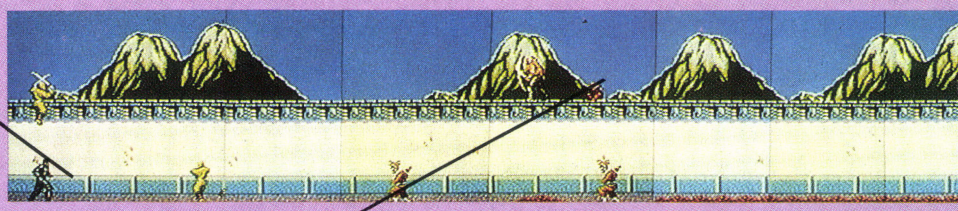
Chain

Turn around quickly when on this pedestal. A ninja will attack from behind.

10,000 points

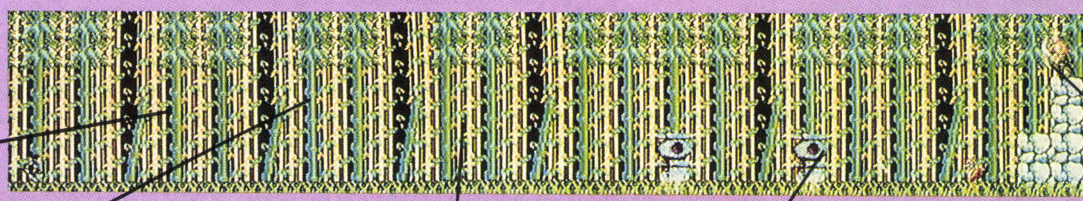
MISSION 5, STAGE 1

As soon as the screen appears, move as far to the left as you can, then crouch and fire. You should be able to get the green ninjas easily using this method.



10,000 points

MISSION 5, STAGE 2



Be prepared to shoot a fast-flying ninja here.

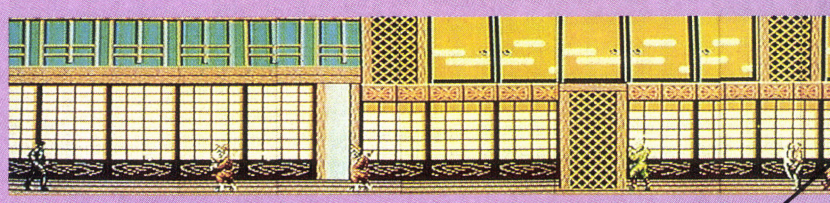
The flying ninja that will appear here is difficult to hit. Instead of shooting him, as soon as he appears, duck down and move to the left. He'll fly off without harming you (if you time it right).

You should be able to avoid the flying ninja that'll appear here by jumping over him.

A ninja will appear as soon as you jump up onto this pedestal. Jump over him by leaping in a counter-clockwise direction. (You can control the direction of your jump while in the air with the arrow pad.)

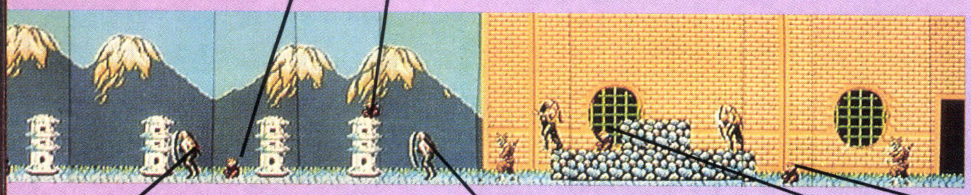
Move slowly through here, and be prepared to shoot at least two flying ninjas.

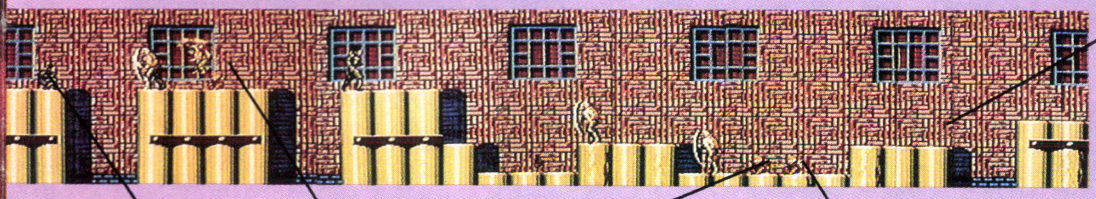
MISSION 5, STAGE 3



Life Max

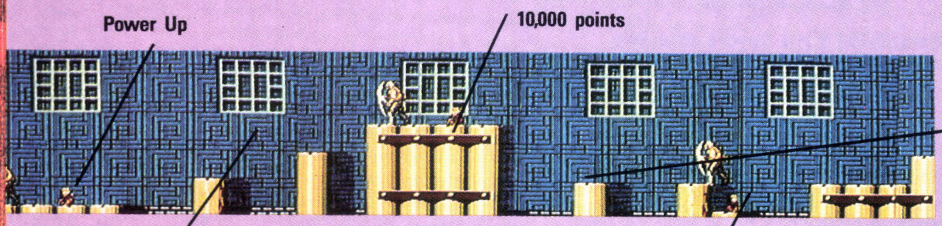
MISSION 4, STAGE 1



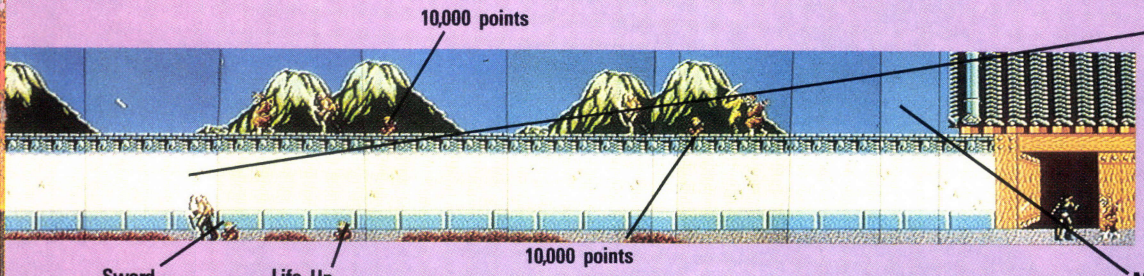


This gap is pretty tough to jump over, especially with a green ninja waiting for you on the other side. The best thing to do is to walk right to the edge and shoot the green ninja as soon as it appears. Then you can concentrate on making the jump to the other side without worrying about being knocked off into the water.

MISSION 4, STAGE 3

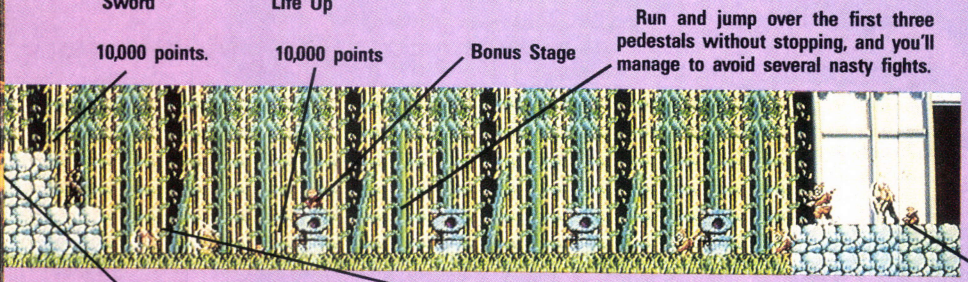


When you land on this pedestal, jump immediately to the next. If you don't, you'll find yourself being attacked from two sides and will almost surely fall.



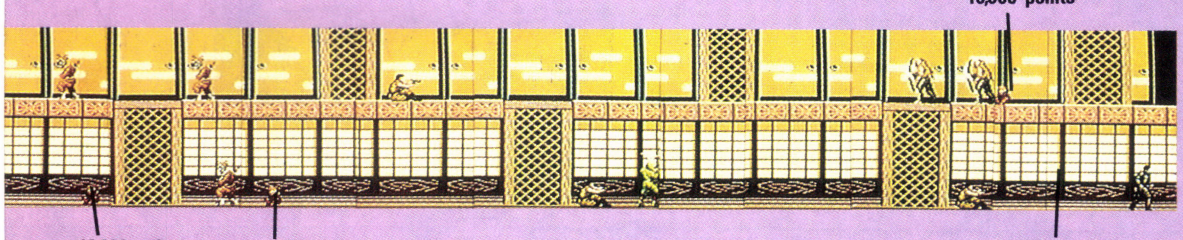
If you try to get this mongo by dropping down right behind him, he'll bump you back into the hole. Instead, get on the other side of the hole (to the left, as close to the hole as you can), and shoot him from there. Then you can get the kidnapped child easily.

Move slowly through this area, and don't be afraid to back up in order to give yourself plenty of room to fight when the green ninjas appear.



First shoot the mongo, then jump up on top of this platform, firing to the right the second you touch down. Shoot the instant you grab the kidnapped kid too.

Getting by here can be tough. The best way is to wait until just the right moment, and then drop down right in front of the first mongo, firing as you do. Keep firing until you wipe them all out.



CHRISTMAS COMPUTER GAME PREVIEW

by Arnie Katz,
Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

Bigger, fancier and better games are heading to stores in time for holiday giving. Many publishers now believe that playing it safe with generic programs and old-hat hardware like the Commodore 64 cost the industry millions in 1988. A few corporate corpses have washed up on the financial beach and the would-be survivors have stacked their chips on premium quality titles.

Some of the field's biggest names felt Nintendo's sting at the cash register last Christmas. It put teeth into analysts' warnings about the danger of dependency on cheap British and European games. Publishers have faced the fact that games created to run on 48K tape-based computers can't compete with multi-megabyte video games. The best of this winter's new games sport improved sound and graphics, friendlier interfaces and a richness seldom found in cartridge contests.

If you've always wanted to play professional basketball or battle strange creatures of ultimate evil, your personal golden age of gaming is about to begin. Tanks and hoops will be as popular in the next 6 to 12 months as games about fighter planes and the national pastime were last year.

Hardware and Peripherals

True to last May's VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT prediction, IBM PC and 16-bit machines are now virtually the whole show in home computing. IBM and compatible systems account for up to 70% of the installed base.

Amiga hardware sales have risen steadily since the debut of the Amiga 500, and many software companies that wouldn't look at the Commodore machine in 1988 are now ardent supporters.

The Amiga is winning its market-share battle against the Atari ST in England. Hot products from Great Britain may soon be developed on the Amiga and ported to the ST, rather than vice versa. This would improve games by fully exploiting the Amiga's capabilities.

The Apple Macintosh and Mac II mystify many publishers. They know the audience is there, but they haven't quite figured out how to appeal to its unusual preferences. More games will be transferred to the Macintosh from MS-DOS and Amiga in 1990 than in past years, but most new games for the system will still come from Mac specialists.

Many 1988 releases for IBM PC computers experimented with graphics boards. EGA is now recognized as the standard for games, though top titles sport VGA graphics. CGA's limited color palette makes it weak for entertainment applications, though many companies still support it.

Currently, sound boards are the hot item. The Roland Board, championed by Sierra, produces breathtaking compu-music, but its retail price of nearly $1,000 scares many.

RealSound, a software-based enhancement from Access Software could be a compromise. It is relatively cheap, and while it can't match the audio excellence of the expensive boards, it improves the listenability of music and sound effects on IBM PC programs. Some companies may add it to their software beginning in mid-1990.

In the middle lie boards like the Ad Lib and the Sound Master PC. Again, there's some trade off of quality for price, but both are vastly superior to the IBM PC machines as they stand.

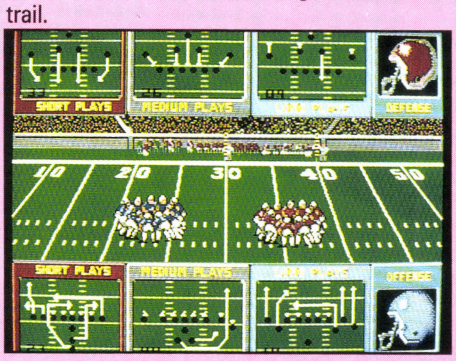
The potential for consumer confusion is alarming. With so many sound boards, the industry has not reached a consensus about which ones to support. Some games will include code for as many as five different audio boards.

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier follows the *Enterprise* in yet another sequel of this cult phenomenon.

Johnny Can License

Will America become as license-happy as the United Kingdom? It may already have happened. Between the tie-in products coming from overseas and those developed here, licenses could easily account for half of all major releases in the next year.

Simon & Schuster's woes have created an opening for other publishers to work with one of science fiction's hottest properties. *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (IBM PC, Amiga and Macintosh), with breathtaking graphics and sound, follows the storyline of last summer's box office bonanza as the *Enterprise* races to the center of the known universe with Klingons hot on their trail.



Affiliation with the popular television sports broadcast should help Data East's *ABC's Monday Night Football* sell well.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, the 1989 mega-movie, has inspired two computer games. The action game has three levels of arcade-style play, each with two events. In the graphic adventure, the computerist becomes Indy or his father Henry, as they chase after the Holy Grail. Both will be available for the IBM PC and Amiga systems.

Two hip cop dramas are going computer before the end of 1988. Capstone's *Miami Vice* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II and Commodore 64) and Box Office's *Beverly Hills Cop* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) are based, respectively, on the television and film series. Both express their plots as a string of action games linked by noninteractive sequences that add characterization and texture.

Everyone's favorite spy, James Bond, returns to computers in *Licence to Kill* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64). Created by Britain's Domark, it is a succession of action games in which Bond fights a druglord on land, sea and air.

It's slime time again! Activision is backing this year's movie sequel with *Ghostbusters II* (IBM PC and Amiga). This action-strategy game, closely tied to the comedy caper, is a race to find out the source of the evil ectoplasm rampaging through New York City.

Nothing could be farther from spook-chasing hijinks than Taito's *Rambo III*. Like the action flick, this role-playing adventure focuses on the rescue of Colonel Trautman. Exceptional graphics and sound earned praise from British critics last winter, and it should please U.S. gamers as well.

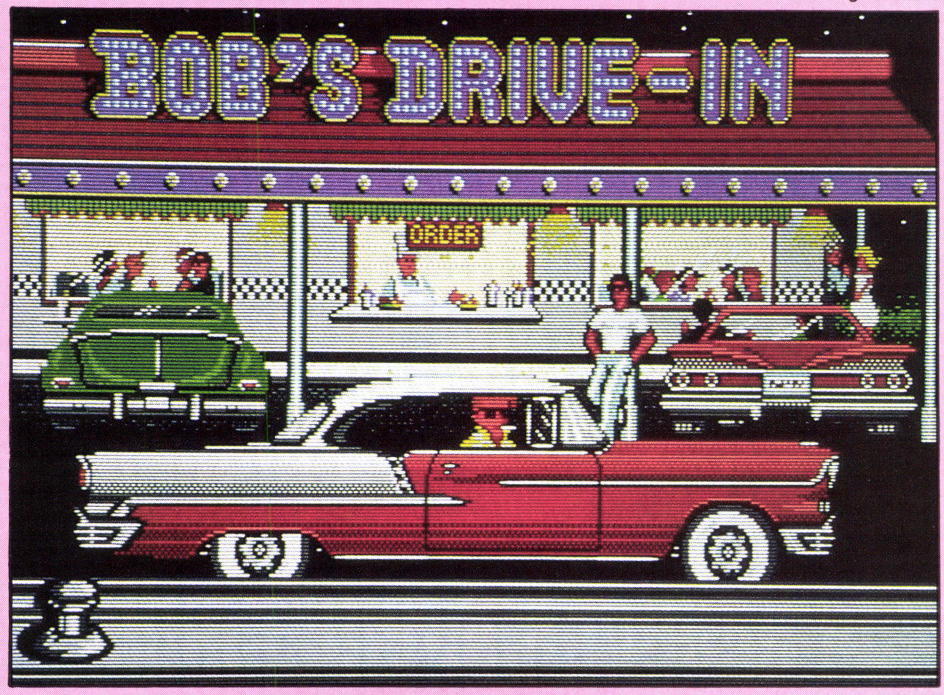
Outstanding translations of Sega quarter-snatchers for home computers will continue to flow from Mindscape under the Sega Software label. The next two titles are *Shinobi* and *After Burner* (both for all major computers). A version of the latter is already a big seller in England, but International Development Group is completely revamping it to meet the higher standards of the U.S. market.

Also rolling home from the arcades is Data East's *Heavy Barrel* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and Macintosh). The player must search the underground missile complex for parts of a superweapon, and then use it to destroy the terrorist band that has captured the installation. Complex strategy as well as blazing combat are highlights of this one- or two-player contest.

Several comic book tie-ins are slated to appear within the next six months. Paragon Software, distributed by Medalist Software in the U.S., plans to follow up its *Dr. Doom's Revenge* with *X-Men* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64). Beautifully drawn versions of Marvel's team of heroic mutants are certain to be a highlight.

Superman: Man of Steel (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64), originally published in Great Britain by TyneSoft, is finally coming to this side of the Atlantic via Capstone. This interactive comic book challenges the player to survive a hectic day in the life of the world's most famous superhero. The computer reads the story in the panels and plays one of the action games during major confrontations with evil.

Microlllusions has designed a quartet of action adventures based on beloved Hanna-Barbera TV-cartoon characters. Aimed at nostalgic adults as well as kids are *The Flintstones, The Jetsons, Scooby Doo* and *Jonny Quest*, all due out by the fourth quarter of 1989. All feature cartoon-quality visuals true to the classic animated shows. The darkhorse candidate for a hit is *Scooby Doo*. It may not evoke as many memories as "Yabba-dabba-doo!," but the actual design is surprisingly challenging for adventurers of all ages.



California Dreams' *Hot Rod* gives the armchair gearhead the opportunity to customize a car without getting greasy hands.

Sierra hopes to get an edge over rival card disks with *Hoyle's Book of Games* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh). The gamer can enjoy favorites like Crazy 8s, Old Maid and Cribbage against up to three robot opponents. Each one has a distinctive personality and card sense, and their on-screen pictures are cute and cleverly animated. The regulation Hoyle decks feature animated face cards.

Electronic editions of three classic boardgames are headed to the U.S. from Virgin Mastertronics. *Clue: Master Detective* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) premieres this month. IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST versions of *Monopoly* and *Risk* are also scheduled.

The popular British boardgame, *Blood Bowl*, gets an electronic edition which Box Office will publish early in the winter. This sports-strategy game mixes American football and rugby with fantasy to produce a violent pastime for orcs and ogres. The computer version is faithful to Jervis Johnson's brainchild, and it includes many rules introduced through supplements and articles in *White Dwarf*.

Two licensed soccer programs are *Keith Van Eron's Pro Soccer* (IBM PC) and *Rick Davis' World Trophy Soccer* (Amiga), both named for athletes who are better known in Europe than here. The former is Medalist Software's aerial simulation of indoor and outdoor soccer, while the latter is Mastertronics' first title in the Masterplay line, games which are said to be identical to their coin-op counterparts.

Honors for the most offbeat license go to *The Krystal* (IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST), an epic adventure from Spotlight based on an abortive musical called *The Krystal of Kronos*. Space pirate Dancis Frake must retrieve the long-lost artifact in a game which includes elements of adventuring, strategy and even arcade-style action.

Buzzword of the Year

Sometimes a company breaks away from the pack with a truly novel idea. That's what Cinemaware did with *Defender of the Crown*, and it took other publishers nearly three years to catch up. Then there are developments which erupt from 100 sources at once.

The polygon-fill graphics fad is a little of each. England's Rainbird showcased the technique in *Virus* last year, but the game made little impression on U.S. gamers. Suddenly, polygon-fill graphics are everywhere.

Polygon fill doesn't chew up memory, animates well and looks more solid than lattice graphics (such as the planet-skimming scene in *Captain Blood*). Publishers hope you'll love the look, because they intend to make a lot of games with polygon-fill graphics in 1990.

Accent on Action

The computer field has reacted strongly to the video-game renaissance. Software sales are 10% ahead of 1988, but continued growth depends on stopping video-game market-share gains. The battle for gamers' dollars has prompted companies to develop action contests based on both coin-ops and original concepts. *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top o' Fun*, by Chris (*Infiltrator*) Gray, is a slightly wacky arcade anthology with a circus theme. The player can display skill in six events but must keep an eye peeled for Fiendish Freddy, who tries to sabotage the computerist's efforts.

Gauntlet II (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64), follows up the success of last year's *Gauntlet*. This move-and-shoot extravaganza is a "must have" for those who like their gaming at a frenetic pace. The ability to add a second player for cooperative or competitive play is one of the fantasy fight's most appealing features.

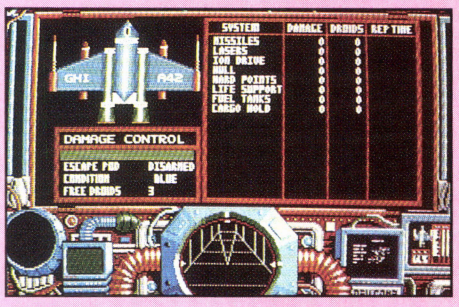
Budokan (IBM PC and Amiga) is the name of a famous Japanese arena and of this comprehensive martial-arts combat game. The player can use up to 30 moves in each of four disciplines: karate, kendo, bo and nunchaku. Once the warrior has learned enough from the teachers at the *dojo*, ten masters are ready to provide relentless opposition.

Speaking of Sports

Undaunted by competition, publishers are sticking with sports. And that's not distant gunfire you hear. It's the sound of electronic basketballs slapping against digital parquet courts in all the new hoop simulations.

Cinemaware's latest sports disk is *TV Sports: Basketball* (most computers). It features multiple court views, statistically influenced action, height differences among players and the usual outstanding Cinemaware art and sound.

Broderbund, the new distributor for Ed Ringler's SportTime label, has *Omniplay Basketball* for fall. Omniplay enhances the basic game with separately available disks. Additions include the statistics of real pro and college players and a courtside perspective.



Spotlight's *Federation* is a state-of-the-art space battle in the same vein as *Elite*.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS and Commodore 64), by Melbourne House, is a scrolling side-perspective version of hoops. Mastertronics will issue a high-memory version of the program which is said to be identical to the arcade machine.

Lakers vs. Celtics Basketball (IBM PC and Amiga) is misnamed, because this NBA-playoff

simulation has the full ladder of teams, not just two. A prime attraction of this action contest is that on-screen players look like the actual athletes. It's quite a novelty to see Kareem's goggles and bald head thunder down the dark wood floor.

The flurry of basketball simulations doesn't mean publishers have forgotten baseball and football. Although the fields are crowded, expect new entries in both categories. Scott Orr, the inventor of the action-strategy sports category, has a new line from Data East. First to the stores will be *ABC's Monday Night Football*, with baseball and basketball to follow.

Electronic Arts is finally satisfied with *John Madden Football* (IBM PC, Apple and Amiga). The intricate system for creating a playbook proved too unwieldy. The revised program is much easier to manipulate, which cuts playing time to less than an hour.

Accolade hopes *Hardball II* (IBM PC and Amiga) can sell as many copies as the 1985 Bob Whitehead design (500,000). Fans of *Hardball* should enjoy the 1989 version even more. The five camera angles make it much easier to track batted balls, especially those hit to the outfield. The new edition also includes customized infield defense, league play, instant replays and a team-construction module.

Those who take their armchair managing more seriously should look for *Pure Stat Baseball II* (IBM PC, Amiga and Commodore 64). Software Simulations has greatly improved the graphics, putting more emphasis on the animated diamond, and added even more factors to the simulation's mathematical model.

The sport of kings finally gets a superb simulation, courtesy of Ed Ringler and SportTime. *Omniplay Horse Racing* (IBM PC) simulates thoroughbred racing and pari-mutuel betting using a group of 128 hypothetical horses. Additional modules will add jockey perspective, historical horses and many more aspects of the sport.

Four events comprise *California Games II* (IBM PC): body boarding, jet skiing, skateboarding and snowboarding. The artwork is even more striking than *California Games*, and that is good enough to delight any fan of Epyx's multi-event action-sports anthologies.

Professional wrestling is more of a dramatic presentation than a sport, but it is strictly on the level in home computer games. MicroLeague Sports Association is revamping 1988's hit *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling* with smoother animation, more digitized graphics and newer matches and releasing it as *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling II* (IBM PC and Amiga). One or two rasslin' fans control Hulk Hogan, Randy "Macho Man" Savage and "Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase in matches which feature elaborate entrances and interfering managers. The new version sports more fluid animation and clearer graphics than its predecessor.

Capstone's *Mat Mogul* (all computers) simulates the secret world of wrestling, with the player pulling the promotional strings. The solo gamer schedules arena, broadcast television and pay-per-view events and backs them with heavy hype.

Budokan has over 30 different martial-arts moves for you to master in order to succeed.

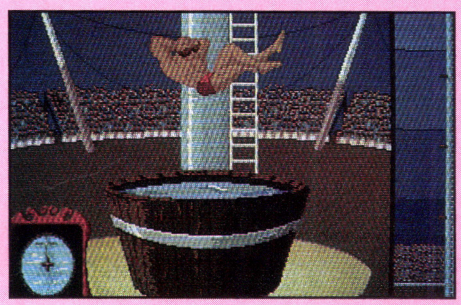
Cinemaware's new affiliate, Image Works, presents a weird sport called *Speedball* (IBM PC, Atari ST and Commodore 64). In this rough-and-tumble contest, teams power the solid metal ball into the opposition's goal. The scrolling playfield shows the arena from overhead so the computerist gets a perfect view of every tackle and shot.

Purple Saturn Day (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS and Commodore 64) is also futuristic, an interstellar olympics. The disk includes four contests: Ring Pursuit, Brain Bowler, Tronic Slide and Time Jump. And the alien athletes are even more marvelously weird than the games they play in this British-designed action sports program.

Doorway to Adventure

Adventure formats proliferate as designers grope for the best way to tell interactive stories. Text quests are dead, but illustrated action and arcade interfaces have never been more popular.

As long as the public stays enthusiastic about science fiction and fantasy, these will remain the top adventure themes. The next crop of releases,



Fiendish Freddy's Big Top o' Fun takes you behind the scenes of a circus big top for multiple games wrapped into one.

however, includes an unusual number of programs in the mystery genre.

David Wolf Secret Agent (IBM PC), an ambitious Dynamix project, depicts an American agent's battle against the sinister forces of Viper. The program is built around four simulators which allow Wolf to hang glide, participate in a car chase, sky dive and pilot a stealth fighter. The four-disk program's artwork is strictly cutting edge. It uses digitized characters against a painted backdrop to achieve remarkable realism.

More than 500 television-quality digitized photos give *Conspiracy: The Deadlock Files* (IBM PC) a gritty feel. When the player accidently gets tangled in a plot to overthrow the U.S., he must scour New York City for clues to unravel the conspiracy.

Manhunter: San Francisco (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh) is a sequel to the Murrys' 1988 *Manhunter: New York*. Like that game, it blends mystery and science fiction. The player goes undercover for the alien orbs to stop the vile genetic experiments of a batty scientist hiding in the half-buried ruins.

It Came from the Desert (most computers) is an arcade adventure based on the giant monster movies of the early 1950s, like *Them*. From a musical score with 20 songs, to the usual lush graphics, *It Came from the Desert* exhibits all the strengths of previous Cinemaware classics. The crack design team has woven the best arcade games Cinemaware has ever created into two different multi-pathed plots. After finishing the first movie, the computerist can try to stop the horde of giant insects in the sequel.

The bad news for fans of Roberta Williams' *King's Quest* is that they must wait until 1991 for another installment. The good news is that Roberta's mystery, *The Colonel's Report* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh) will debut this winter. Set on a New Orleans plantation during the 1920s, this is one of the few adventures which casts the gamer as a female character. It is up to amateur sleuth Laura Bow to solve the crimes which swirl around the Dijon family home.

The Horrorsoft line kicks off with Mike Woodruff's *Personal Nightmare* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64). When a mysterious summons brings the protagonist of this icon-driven adventure to the family mansion, it turns out to be a journey from the mundane to a world of demons and madness. Breathtaking animated sequences may surprise, even shock the faint of heart.

Flesh-eating zombies rise from their graves to rend the flesh of the poor citizens of North City in *Zombies* (IBM PC, Apple II and Commodore 64) by PSI. This action adventure dares the player to walk the streets of the city under siege and survive the Zombie menace for 12 game-hours.

If *Indiana Jones* doesn't deliver enough archeological adventuring, try *Total Eclipse* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) from Spotlight, which uses filled-polygon graphics to put the gamer inside a many-chambered pyramid. The player prowls the rooms of the Egyptian tomb to find the secret shrine before an eclipse triggers an ancient curse.

Lucasfilms' *Loom* (IBM PC) is an icon-driven adventure set in a mythological Age of Great Guilds. A 30-minute audio cassette in Dolby stereo, produced by Lucasfilms' Sproket Systems

division, introduces the game and establishes the complex world background.

Koei's *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* (IBM PC) and MicroProse's *Samurai* (IBM PC) are set in the mysterious East. The former is an illustrated quest from a publisher which has already produced several other Oriental adventures, including *Nobunga's Ambition*, while the latter is similar in format to last year's smash, *Pirates*.

Azazael the Deathbringer has returned to disturb the peace in *Deathbringer* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) from Cinemaware's Spotlight line of European imports. This menu-driven illustrated adventure has over 2,000 color locations. The player, equipped with some of the 600 available pieces of equipment and magic devices, must locate the five gems of Zator, or they will multiply the villain's already vast magical ability.

The husband-and-wife team of Christy Marks and Peter Ledger, both fine writers in other media, add their bit to the legend of King Arthur with *Conquest of Camelot* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh). The search for the Holy Grail is the goal in this graphic adventure done in a variant of the durable *King's Quest* system.

British-based Psygnosis is adding *Beast* (Amiga) to its line of U.S. releases that includes the excellent *Barbarian*. The player fights from the forest to the castle in this action adventure. Smooth animation, 13-layer parallax scrolling and more than 900K of music keep play exciting as well as mind-stretching.

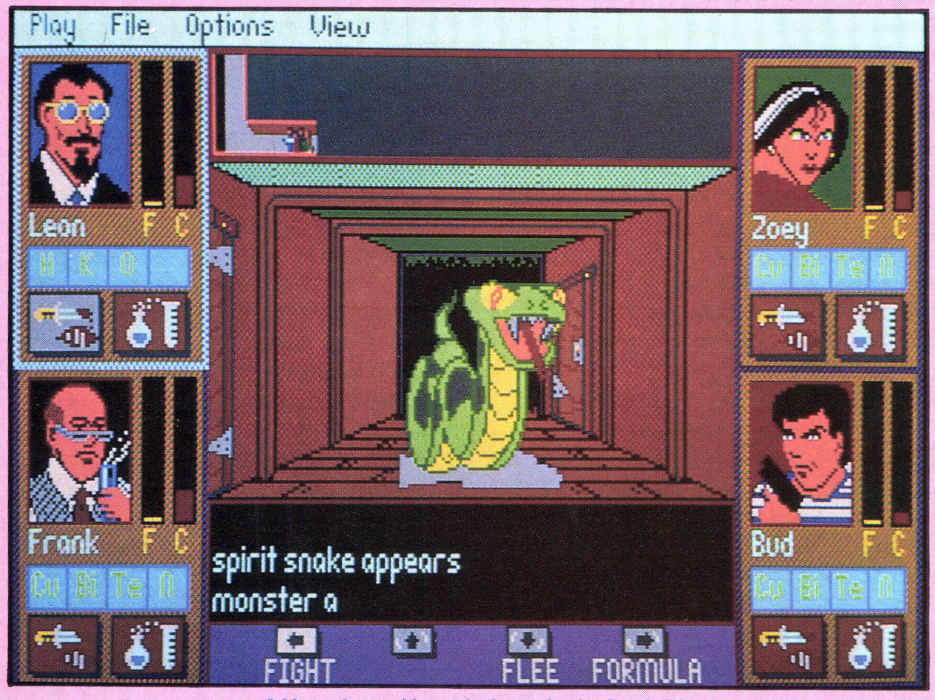
From Japan's Kyodai Software Marketing comes *Ancient Land of Ys* (IBM PC and Apple IIGS). This action adventure won many prizes in Japan for excellent design and spectacular sound. This quest for the six missing books of Ys requires both mental and physical dexterity.

Things are still kinky in the land of the lounge lizards. Co-starring in Al Lowe's second sequel, *Leisure Suit Larry III* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh), is Passionate Patty. The player can shuttle between characters during the game, which gives this interactive graphics adventure a completely unique viewpoint.

Role-playing Round-up

The split between role-playing games (in which characters gain experience and power through encounters) and adventures (in which the player becomes a specific character in a story) is total. Both formats are now so elaborate, thanks to the latest generation of home computers, that differences have become more important than similarities.

Accolade's *Don't Go Alone* (IBM PC) is the first attempt to set up a role-playing system in a horror context. After recruiting a party of ghost hunters, the player leads the intrepid experts through the bizarre rooms and corridors of the world's eeriest haunted mansion.



A bizarre haunted house is the setting for Accolade's *Don't Go Alone*, a horrifying adventure game.

Dragon Wars, from Interplay Productions, figures to be the most played new fantasy role-playing game (RPG) of the year. Fans of the *Bard's Tale* series will be especially interested in this multi-character adventure, *Dragon Wars* (IBM PC), because Brian Fargo was chief designer on both. *Dragon Wars* offers more monsters, a user-variable combat system and a firmer plot structure than generally found in role-playing software.

Software Simulations Inc. (SSI) continues its *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* series by offering a sequel to 1988's *Pool of Radiance* called *Curse of the Azure Bonds* (IBM PC). The multi-character fantasy RPG accepts characters from both previous *AD&D* titles and introduces 25 new high-level magic spells.

Might and Magic Book II: Gates to Another World, by New World Computing, takes the player and a party of eight characters to the world of Cron, where disaster menaces the entire planet. Similar in overall design to *Wizardry* and *Bard's Tale*, this fantasy RPG boasts 60 area maps, over 75 magic spells and 200 weapons and valuable items.

Chivalric fantasy thrills are on tap in Todd Porter's *Knights of Legend* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II and Commodore 64). In this Origin Systems' release, the player embarks on 24 quests set in the last of Ashtalarea. Modular construction allows Origin to follow with three more quest modules, which form a unified epic fantasy.

Greg Malone, who delighted gamers with *Moebius* in 1987, is back with *Windwalker* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II, Commodore 64 and Macintosh), a sequel from Origin Systems. Like Malone's earlier creation, it weds role-playing elements to real-time martial-arts action as the hero journeys through a world of Oriental heroes and legends, depicted in more than 100 lavishly illustrated scenes.

Sierra, already famous for graphics adventures, is expanding into role playing. Japan's Nippon Falcom contributes *Sorcerian* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS and Macintosh), a fantasy RPG with 15 quests to challenge novices and veterans alike. Splashy graphics and plenty of combat have made Sorcerian a hit in Japan and could do the same here.

From the lost world of Spielburg in the Alps to the exotic islands of Silmaria, adventure awaits the magician, thief or warrior who braves the dangers of Sierra's *Hero Quest* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh). The accent is on strategy in this graphics adventure.

Simulators tread new territory

Last year, airplanes and submarines were the hot topics for games. Computerists can expect more of both in the next year, but the most frequent subjects will be tanks and cars.

The most promising of the announced tank simulators is *Tank Squadron* (IBM PC and Commodore 64). This MicroProse title puts the computerist in command of four armored fighting vehicles (AFVs), each of which has a four-man crew. The combination of role-playing and battle action, dressed in graphics reminiscent of *Silent Service*, makes this a guaranteed bull's-eye for compu-tankers.

Sands of Fire (IBM PC), by Digital Illusions for 360° Software, is a historically accurate recreation of the North African theater of World War II. Numerous scenarios put the player in the thick of desert warfare, with its emphasis on lightning strikes and sweeping movement.

Accolade registered a hit with *Test Drive* a year ago and followed it up with *Grand Prix Circuit* and *The Duel: Test Drive II*. The group which designed all three, Distinctive Software, has de-

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veloped simulations of two more speed sports. *Heat Wave* (IBM PC) recreates the excitement of power boats, while *The Cycles* (IBM PC and Commodore 64) presents 15 tough motorcycle courses from around the world. *Test Drive* fans should also enjoy *European Challenge* (Scenery disk II) and *The Muscle Cars* (Car disk II).

Sturgis, North Dakota, site of America's biggest biker convention, is the setting for Mindscape's *Harley Davidson: The Road to Sturgis* (IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST). Contests include a drag race, slow ride and a hill climb. Ticket-happy police, mechanical failures and road hazards test the computerist's ability to control these massive machines.

The streets of San Francisco provide the backdrop for *Vette* (IBM PC, Amiga and Macintosh), a street-racing simulation with a choice of four glamorous Corvettes. Thanks to polygon-fill graphics, there are miles of empty streets to explore, even though the four courses don't quite cover all the hills and valleys. And when solitary play isn't enough, *Vette* runs head-to-head either "live" or via modem.

A different type of auto racing is the subject of California Dreams' *Hot Rod* (IBM PC and Commodore 64). The player picks one of 25 cars, customizes it using the list of 35 spare parts and then puts everything on the line for cash or pink slips in the actual showdown. The large, colorful drawings really bring out important hot-rodding details, like the hot rods' special paint jobs.

Eye of the Storm: Vietnam Combat Helicopter Simulation (IBM PC), by Accolade, challenges the computerist to master a Huey UH-1 copter in 12 combat missions set in war-ravaged Southeast Asia. The player, as the pilot or one of the two gunners, sees either a first-person representation of the battlefield in polygon-fill graphics or views the overall situation from a distance with the 360° external camera.

A pair of flight simulators is scheduled for release before the end of the year from Epyx. *Flyton 500* (IBM PC) is an air-race simulation, while *Snow Strike* concerns the efforts of the U.S. Air Force to root out South American drug smugglers.

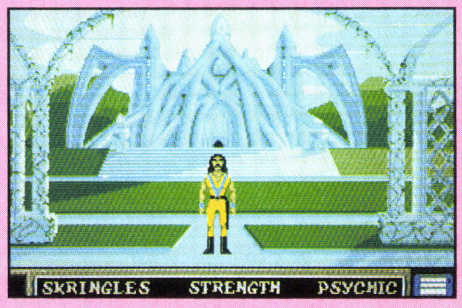
The most eagerly awaited naval simulator is *Harpoon* (IBM PC), 360° Software's long-promised modern combat game. Texas-based Digital Illusions has taken over development, so *Harpoon* is now expected to launch before the end of 1989. The electronic admiral can command a single ship or a fleet in North Atlantic battles. Although the simulation presents each battle in minute detail, the menu-driven interface and an occasional assist from the computerized staff assistant keeps the myriad of options from swamping the harried commander.

Games for Thinkers

The "Silver Age" of video gaming has caused software makers to put renewed emphasis on sound, graphics and play action, but designers haven't forgotten the essential differences between the cartridge and disk markets. Programs which exercise the mind as well as the senses are still a major segment of the gaming hobby.

Avalon Hill's computer version of *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (Atari ST) is a milestone in computer wargaming. The nonelectronic edition is *the* mega-simulation of the European theater of World War II, and the computer should greatly improve playability and slash set-up time to a fraction.

Quietly, Lucasfilms has become one of the most energetic producers of military simulations. *Their Finest Hour* (IBM PC) combines technical accuracy and a "seat of the pants" flying system to simulate World War II air combat over Britain. The would-be air ace can attempt missions with German or British planes.



The Krystal tracks the adventures of space pirate Dancis Frake as he wanders through the cosmos in search of a long-lost artifact.

Like the classic *Robot War*, Stuart Marks' *Omega* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and Macintosh) lets the user design killer robots and command them in battle. The multi-screen, menu-oriented interface in this Origin Systems product makes it easier to use than *Robot War*. Programming skill is not necessary to create a cybertank that can sweep all opposition off the field of battle.

David Wolf Secret Agent is an exciting, action-packed game that can be compared to a James Bond adventure.

Colorful graphics depict the ebb and flow of power as great nations vie for control of North America in *Gold of the Americas* (IBM PC) from Strategic Studies Group (SSG). The player controls England, France, Spain or Portugal to claim and hold a colonial empire.

Can lightning strike twice for Brad Fregger? The producer of *Shanghai* is back with Epyx's *Ishido* (IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Macintosh and Mac II), an abstract strategy game based on a stone-matching contest which dates from Bronze Age England. One to four players place stones to match those on the board in either symbol or color.

Broderbund's prestigious *Carmen Sandiego* series of education games is adding *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?* (IBM PC and Apple II). History comes alive as the player trails Carmen Sandiego using a time machine to swipe the Spanish crown jewels, the Magna Carta and Columbus' sextant.

The Puzzle Gallery, by Cliff (*Fool's Errand*) Johnson, is Miles Computing's first title under its recent affiliate label deal with Electronic Arts. The initial offering, "At the Carnival," is the first of a projected series of puzzle disks and contains 180 new brain-teasers from the author's fertile imagination.

The Jig is Up (IBM PC), by Miles Computing, is a jigsaw-puzzle disk with features never seen in a tabletop product. The individual puzzles have animated sequences and 25 to 256 irregularly shaped pieces.

Federation (IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST), by Gremlin, comes to the U.S. under the Spotlight banner. Its theme of interstellar commerce and combat is similar to 1988's *Elite*, but this lavish, multi-screen strategy game is worth any science fiction fan's attention. Filled-polygon graphics furnish fast-moving visuals for 15 increasingly challenging missions.

The Crystal Ball

The countdown to CD is underway. Although publishers will "push the envelope" of software quality with innovative products, many believe that the next great entertainment revolution is less than two years away. CD-ROM and CD players are not currently available for the home, but the situation will be radically different by mid-1990. NEC will have the CD drive for its TurboGrafx-16 video game, the CD-ROM-equipped FM Townes computer should be available in the U.S. as well as Japan and North American Philips will have its video CD machine ready for market.

Compact disks break the shackles of memory restriction and pave the way for games with video quality graphics and wall-to-wall, movie-style soundtracks. Some companies are so excited about computer entertainment's next phase that they are already working on CD projects, even though there's little prospect of immediate financial return.

For the typical computer gamer, however, the wait for interactive CDs won't be too unpleasant. Although slightly fewer new computer games are set for release during the next 12 months, the overall quality is at least 50% higher than in past years.

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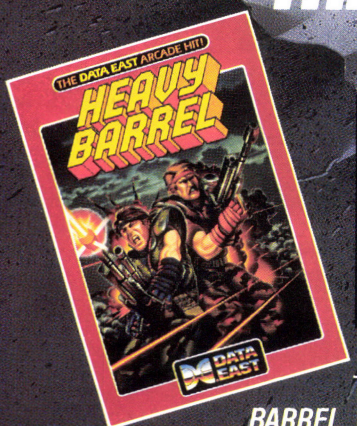

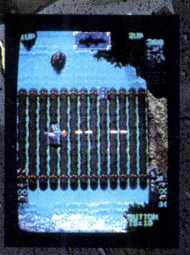

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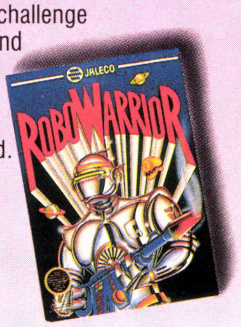

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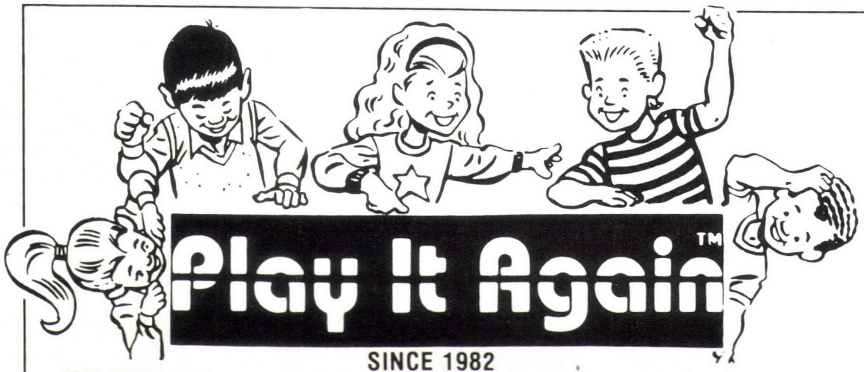

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A SEASON TICKET

WITH SCOTT ORR

by Bill Kunkel

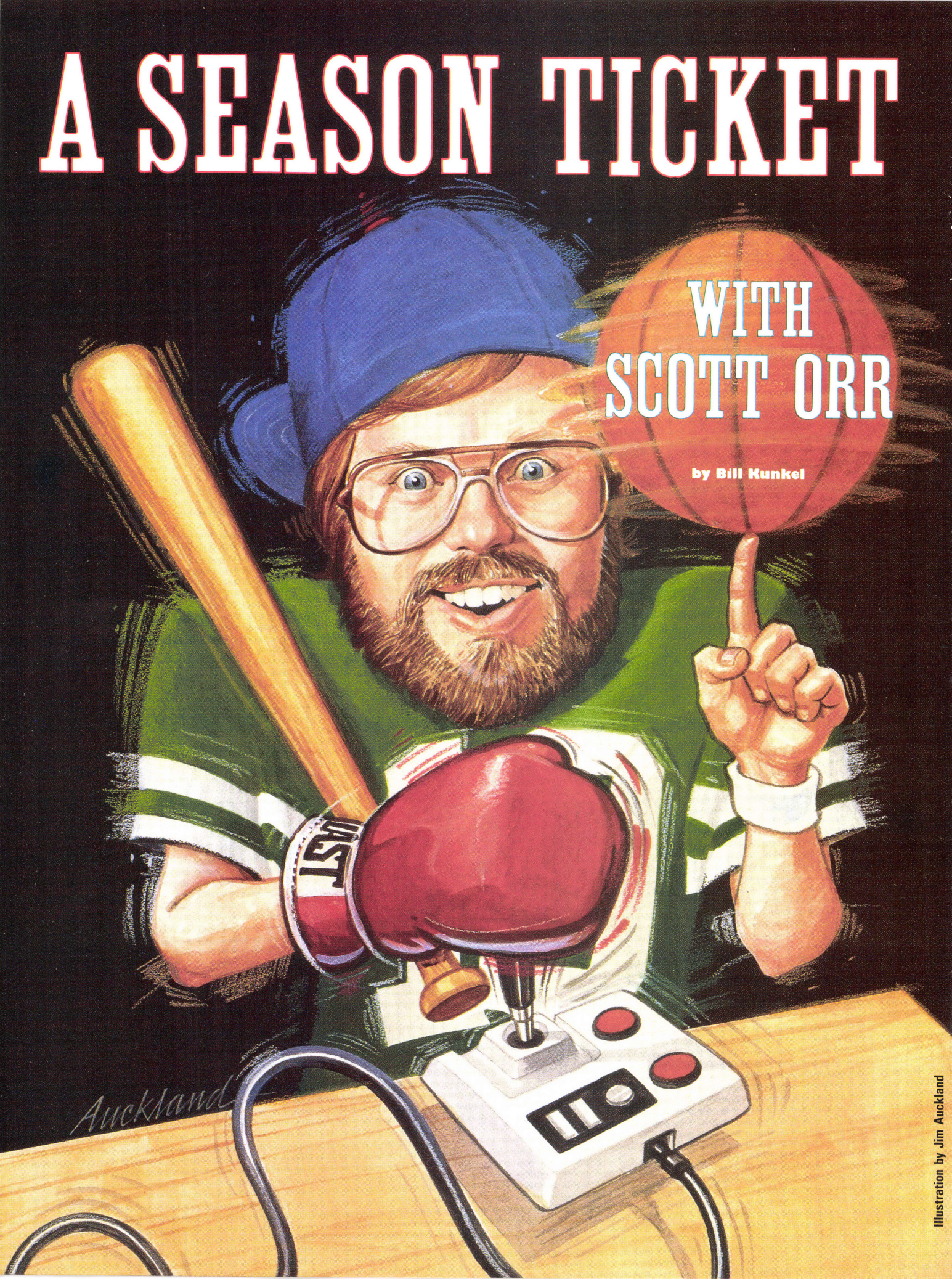

Illustration by Jim Auckland

INTERVIEW

Scott Orr is the chairman of the board when it comes to creating action and action-strategy sports simulations on computer. He was there when there wasn't even a "there" yet! Having designed and/or published the first auto race, baseball and football games on computer way back at the dawn of the decade, today he continues to produce state-of-the-art sports contests. His fourth gridiron game, *ABC's Monday Night Football*, will appear this October as the debut title in his new "Season Ticket" line from Data East.

The story begins in 1980. Orr, just out of grad school, was casting about for his life's work. "I wanted to get into TV, and I was lucky enough to meet someone who was a programming chief at CBS. But the best offer they were willing to make, based on that interview, was as a studio page, so I decided to cast my lot elsewhere."

He returned home to Santa Barbara for the summer and was hired to do marketing by an ambitious hardware packager. While engaged there, he met a young programmer, and they decided to try their hand at game design. "We started work on a game called *Ghost Hunter*, which was a *Pac-Man*-type game. *Pac-Man* was in the arcades at that point, but it hadn't taken off yet. As a matter of fact," he recalls ironically, "we were afraid *Pac-Man* might die before we got *Ghost Hunter* out there."

Ghost Hunter was released for the humble Atari 400 in cassette format during the summer of '81 on the Arcade Plus label. "We were putting cassettes in [plastic bags] till two a.m., the whole trip." The game was a smash success. Arcade Plus was even able to avoid the initial salvo of Atari lawsuits when the Sunnyvale giant, having purchased exclusive U.S. home rights to the original dot gobbler and being, itself, many months away from releasing its official version, decided to nuke any publisher with a *P-M* clone. "I actually went to Atari to show them the game before we released it," says Orr. "I hit it off with the guy in charge, and because *Ghost Hunter* was sufficiently different from *Pac-Man*, they agreed to leave us alone."

This moratorium was lifted once Atari got a load of *Ghost Hunter*'s sales clout. "We were actually number one on the Softsel chart at one point, before Softsel got so heavily into business software. Pac-Mania had hit by this time, and we rode the wave. Then, Atari advised us that we were either going to have to substantially change or remove *Ghost Hunter* from the market altogether: preferably the latter. At this time my partner decided he wanted to run the business on his own and, since I didn't have an equity position with the company, I left, along with my brother Keith and Dan Ugren in June of 1982. By September we had set up GameStar and released *Baja Buggies*."

Baja Buggies was quite a remarkable game. "Dan Ugren designed that game six months before *Pole Position* was released. *Baja Buggies* was the first game to feature a scrolling background, and Dan was fighting to get it all into the limited [16K] memory space. He wanted to put in palm trees and stuff, but it just wasn't possible in that space."

The second GameStar release was even more important to the company. Orr's *Star League Baseball* was a revelation, fusing arcade-style action with baseball strategy to create an instant classic. "First and foremost, my idea has always been to create games I'll have fun with. I go back, as a gamer, to the days of *Pong*, and one of the reasons I started GameStar was to make games that were not available on computer. At the time, sports games were not considered a 'legitimate' category. Computer users were seen as this certain nerdy type, and it was assumed that they only wanted these very specific kinds of games. Well, I knew that wasn't true. The success of the Intellivision *proved* that there were, in fact, millions of people who wanted to play sports games."

Orr's marketing background helped him discern what those potential customers wanted. "You talk to people. Of course, in this business, where you have a lead time of anywhere from nine months to a year-and-a-half, you have to guess what people will want at the point when it's released. At the very least, however, you have to give them solid features. We've created features that have become pretty standard in the industry, but in the early days, for example, solitary play against a computer was not available. We decided that our games *had* to have solitary play because it was really important, since our market research indicated that most computer owners liked to play games solo.

"Then there's a variety of opponents. Even as far back as *Baja Buggies*, you could race against A.J. Cactus, Mario Sanduni and those guys, and they all had different styles. Then in *Star League Baseball* we introduced the idea of pitcher fatigue and multiple relievers with different pitch selection and skill. The top-down view we created in *Star Bowl Football* you see all the time. Then again," he reconsiders, "there are only so many ways you can show a football game—and we've used them all!" It's true. In the course of four football simulations, Orr has used aerial, fifty-yard line and on-field viewpoints, while the upcoming *ABC's Monday Night Football* employs a more realistic, angled, overhead perspective.

Speaking of the new game, how exactly did Orr come to leave his beloved GameStar to fashion his new Season Ticket label? It's a long story: After *Star Bowl Football* came a series of successful sports simulations, including *On-Court Tennis, On-Field Football, GFL Championship Football* and many others. And, though quality graphics had been trademarks of GameStar software from the beginning, with *Star Rank Boxing* things took a major leap forward. "In the early '80s, there were no real artists working in game design: It was all what you'd call 'programmer art,' and the overall quality wasn't that great. It was when I met Doug Barnett, who did *Star Rank Boxing* for us, that

I realized what you could really *do* with graphics." A few years back, GameStar was acquired by Activision. Orr went along to run the operation, but after several years of chafing at the corporate bit, he and Activision parted company. Within months, the announcement came that Data East had snapped him up and given him his own line of sports games, Season Ticket.

ABC's Monday Night Football will be out in October for the IBM PC machines and the Commodore 64/128. A baseball and basketball game will follow, as will a race-car game being created with Al Unser. "In a sense, I'm going back to the old days with Season Ticket. We're using state-of-the-art graphics, but the guts of the game will be the kind where you can basically pick it up and play. Over the past couple of years, a lot of sports games have become overcomplicated. These days, when I want to play a football game, I play *Tecmo Bowl* on the Nintendo. It's easy to play, and I can play a game in 10 to 15 minutes.

"We're using a twist on a lot of the non-game interfaces we see, and we're producing games where a novice can pick it up and play without compromising the strategy for a more sophisticated player."

In these days of producers, designers, programmers and other roles, we wondered what Orr considers himself. "There are differences from company to company, but I basically liken the term 'designer' to the screenwriter and part of the director's role in movies. I'd compare the producer's role in software to someone doing half the director's job and being the producer in movies. At some companies, the producer is strictly a producer in that he doesn't really have any creative input. Others, like John Cutter at Cinemaware, are heavily involved in the creative end.

"My role is primarily that of designer, to the extent that I'm the primary creative influence," Orr explains. "Data East actually has its own producer who handles that end of it."

Before wrapping up the interview, there was one final question that had to be addressed on behalf of GameStar fans everywhere: Whatever happened to Dutch Duggan? Orr laughed, remembering the character who was originally intended to star in a line of action-adventure games. That series has yet to materialize—despite the between-innings advertisement that appeared way back in *Star League Baseball*. "Dutch is still alive," he assured us. "Unfortunately, we haven't found the appropriate vehicle for him yet, so he'll stay in the background for the time being. But nobody else has ever done a series quite like that and at some point. . ." His voice trailed off as he considered the possibility.

Dutch Duggan lives! And so does Scott Orr, still busily creating the sports games that he wants to play.

Scott Orr Checklist

This is the first complete list of programs which Scott Orr either designed, produced or designed *and* produced. It is, to the best of Orr's recollection, chronological:

Baja Buggies (Gamestar—Producer): The first computer driving game of the *Pole Position* type, it actually appeared six months before the Atari coin-op. Designed by Dan Ugren.

Star League Baseball (Gamestar—Producer/Designer): The first major action-strategy baseball simulation for home computers, *Star League* set the standard for years to come.

Star Bowl Football (Gamestar—Producer/ Designer): Made use of the revolutionary aerial field view and side player view to bring football action-strategy to home computers, much as *Star League* did for baseball.

On-Field Football (Gamestar—Producer/Designer): Basically a redesign of *Star Bowl*. Was originally intended to be the game that eventually became *GFL Championship Football*, but technology wouldn't allow it. First in a new series.

On-Court Tennis (Gamestar—Producer/Designer): Innovative tennis simulation was tough to master but offered some real thrills to experts.

On-Track Racing (Gamestar—Producer/Designer): Slot-car simulation that was somewhat lost in the shuffle when EA simultaneously produced *Racing Destruction Set*.

Star Rank Boxing (Gamestar—Producer): Action-strategy pugilism which was later reworked with many of the rough edges removed.

GBA Championship Basketball: Two-on-Two (Gamestar/Activision—Producer/Designer): Superior basketball simulation that permitted passing and strategy with the addition of an extra man per side. Employed an innovative angled overhead perspective that has become the standard for roundball recreations. This was the first title Orr produced after Gamestar was acquired by Activision.

GFL Championship Football (Gamestar/Activision—Producer/Designer): Innovative on-field perspective was still ahead of its time and more than the technology could handle. Nonetheless, a remarkable piece of work which offers an intimate, first-person perspective that brings the player out of the stands and puts him onto the field.

Championship Baseball (Gamestar/Activision—Producer/Designer): Basically a revamping of *Star League*, with the addition of a behind-the-plate split-screen perspective. Still a classic.

Star Rank Boxing II (Gamestar/Activision—Producer/Designer): Orr does his own boxing game and improves most of the weaknesses of the original.

Pete Rose Pennant Fever (Gamestar/Activision—Producer/Designer): The last game that Orr created for Gamestar/Activision was not the ground-breaking success that Star League had been. Beyond the Pete Rose connection, which has probably not been all that big a help in light of subsequent events, it is fairly unremarkable. *PRPF* was not completed when Orr left Gamestar.

Take Down (Gamestar/Activision—Producer): An unremarkable wrestling game that Orr could barely remember the name of. Completed after he left Gamestar.

ABC's Monday Night Football (Season Ticket/Data East—Designer): Orr's fourth football game and, judging from early versions, maybe his most successful. A back-to-basics effort that balances graphics, strategy and accessible play mechanics. Should score a touchdown. **—B.K.**

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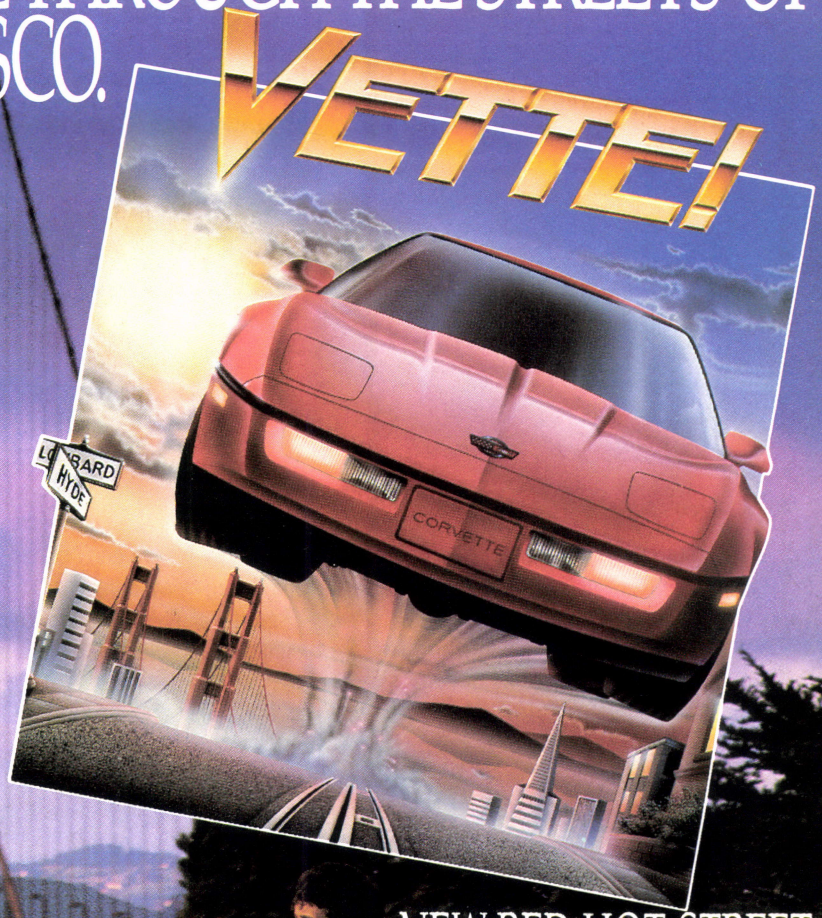

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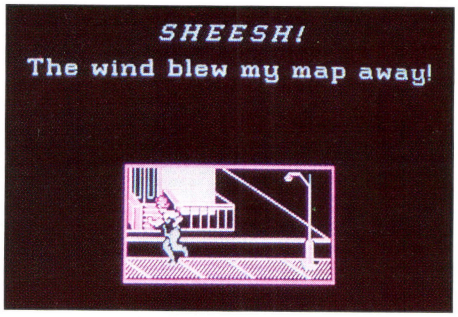
Keeping Up with The Honeymooners

First Row

Versions: Commodore 64, IBM PC

First Row Software brings the crazy antics and wild schemes of one of America's most beloved characters, Ralph Kramden, to computers everywhere with *The Honeymooners*. In this computer game, the player must help Ralph, Norton, Alice and Trixie survive three of Ralph's more harebrained schemes as he struggles to raise enough money to go to the Raccoon convention in Miami. Each scheme is a separate game in which the player tries to amass as much money as possible before time runs out. At the end of each challenge, the computerist can choose to risk his winnings by playing the "Ninety-Nine Thousand Dollar Answer," where he has a chance to double his money.



SCHEME ONE: No Ifs, Ands or Bus

The player must drive the Gotham bus, picking up and delivering as many passengers as possible before Ralph's memory begins to fade; i.e., time runs out. The trick here is to watch the rate at which the passengers blink. The faster a person is blinking, the more he/she is worth. Concentrate on picking up these people first, and grab the slower ones only if they are on the way to the same destination as a more valuable passenger.

Try not to pick up more than two passengers going to different locations at any one time, as it can become difficult to remember where each one is going. Carrying too many passengers also increases the chances of Ralph getting caught with stray passengers when time runs out. Remember to note the positions of the manhole covers at the onset of the round. If Norton gets on the bus, get him to a manhole cover as soon as possible, because if he is aboard when time runs out, all money earned for the round is lost!

SCHEME TWO: Sewer I Will

Ralph's second brainstorm consists of navigating Norton through the Bensonhurst sewer system fixing leaks. Norton earns between $1 and $5 for each leak fixed, but only if he "surfaces" before time expires.

This scheme is basically a memory test. Study the map carefully, and plan out a path for Norton before the map blows away. Start slowly, covering a small section at a time. When the area is completely patched, head back toward the ladder, which should be used as a central reference point. Once the ladder is in sight, start on a new section, but remember: If Norton passes the ladder, he will automatically surface, so make sure that the path chosen does not involve crossing the ladder's position.

Inevitably, at some point Norton will get confused and become totally disoriented. Should this tragedy befall our hero, the best strategy is to look down the tunnels for those which have no leaks. These are the ones Norton has been down before, and he can use them to retrace his steps.

SCHEME THREE: Alice & Trixie Go to Pieces

Alice & Trixie volunteer to help Ralph out, but because of his jealous nature, Ralph has refused to let Alice work in an office (where there might be men lurking about, after all). Instead, they are stuck assembling jigsaw puzzles for Morgan's Department store.

The best strategy here is to pick a puzzle piece with a recognizable image, like a face or window, and begin placing it in the top half of the puzzle until it fits. This way, the player can establish a foundation to build the rest of the puzzle around.

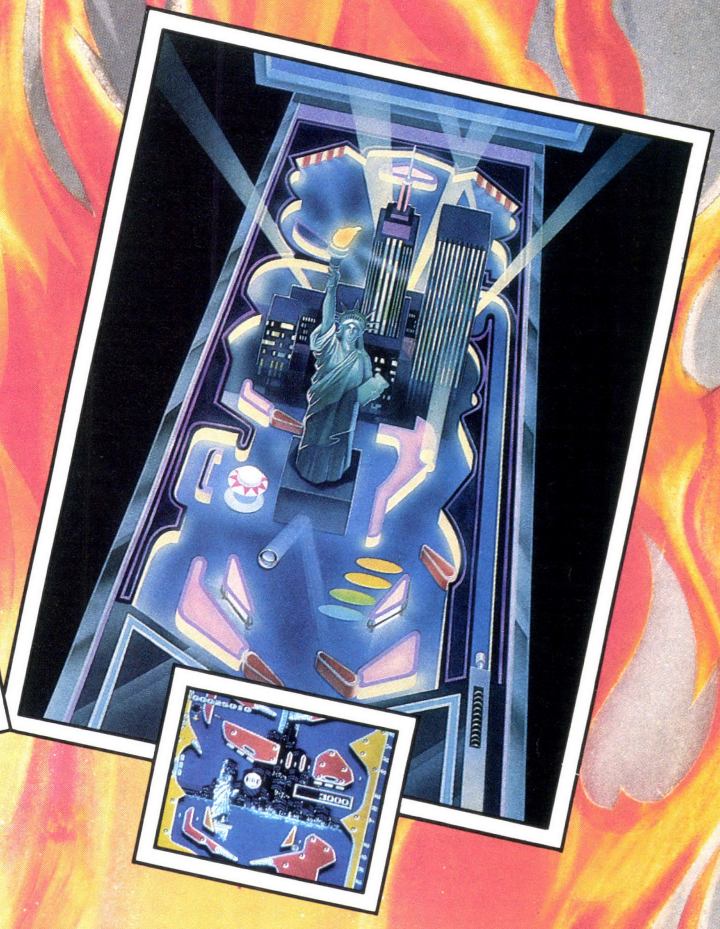
Don't get caught staring at the puzzle in an effort to figure out what goes where while the timer ticks on. Instead, while looking,

continue to move pieces around in a random fashion. This may lead to a lucky guess, and moving the pieces around may spark an insight.

The $99,000 Answer

Whether or not one should risk all his earnings on the trivia game is a big decision that should not be taken lightly. The only advice we can offer here is that the questions can be quite difficult and require detailed knowledge of *Honeymooners*' quotes, events

HAL America Brings You 2 Hot New Games!



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and places. If the player is a big *Honeymooners* fan, this should be tough but playable, since there are not that many episodes to base questions around. If the gamer is an infrequent viewer, however, and has not seen every episode at least three dozen times, the trivia game should be played only if the money the user has already earned can be sacrificed. Otherwise, all will be lost, and instead of going to Miami Beach, it could be *bang-zoom*, a trip to the moon!

—Frank Tetro

Tackling Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom

Mindscape

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Apple II, Commodore 64, IBM PC

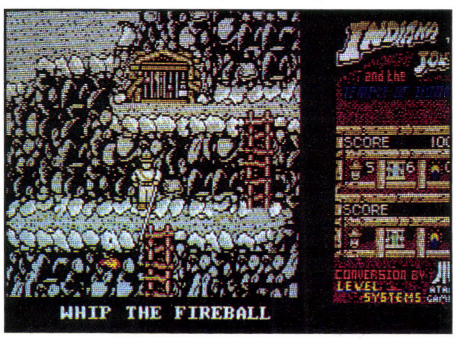
You're in the Temple of Doom, not one of the world's most popular tourist haunts, to be sure. You're cast in the role of Indiana Jones, and your mission is to recover the stolen Sankara stones and defeat the evil Mola Ram. As Indy, you must prevail through three different challenges to recover all of the stones. Upon retrieving the last Sankara, Indy must then cross a treacherous bridge guarded by the high priest.

Level 1

In Level 1, Indy must do battle with the guards of the underground: vicious cave bats and poisonous snakes. As if this wasn't bad enough, Mola Ram will randomly appear and hurl fireballs at poor, bedeviled Indy. The player must battle upward toward the railcar, then free the children who have been enslaved in the caverns.

The trick here is to step lightly and carry a long whip. The ledges are narrow, and Indy can easily fall if he is too close to the edge. To avoid this, have him walk flush against the wall when on a ledge. The same holds true for the ladders—be sure Indy is dead center on a ladder as he climbs up or down. If he is off to one side, he is likely to slip and fall.

The guards and snakes are easy to handle: Simply whip them when they get too close and continue on. It's the cave bats that can be quite bothersome. Since the bats tend to come at Indy diagonally, it is difficult to hit them with the whip if the player does not move. To get the cleanest shot, run either left or right, or climb up to get in line with the bat as he approaches. Once set up, crack him one with the whip as he gets in range.



Mola Ram's fireballs can be dealt with in the same manner described previously. One thing the instructions do not mention, however, is that Mola Ram can be driven away before he is able to release the fireball. This is accomplished by hitting him with the whip in the first few seconds of his "guest" appearance. This should only be attempted if the high priest appears close enough to whip right away. Otherwise, Mola Ram may get the fireball off and fry our hero.

Level 2

The mine tunnels are pretty straightforward but the secret here is to take it slow. The car can travel quite fast and it may *seem* like the best way to outrun the hoods. This is not true, however, since traveling too fast makes it difficult to react to dead ends or obstacles. Instead, go slowly and make the hoods jump out ahead of Indy. Then speed up a bit and ram them from behind.

Try to keep an eye on where Indy is headed, not where he is. This will allow the player to see and respond to dead ends or obstacles more efficiently. If Indy has a gang of hoods on his tail, speed up slightly and change tracks a couple of times. This will usually lose the thugs or at least put them on another track, giving our hero time to slow down and ram them at the next intersection.

Level 3

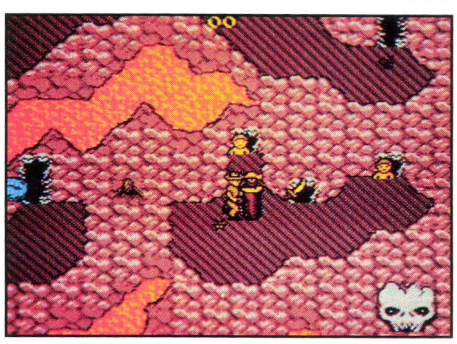
Once inside the temple, Indy must fight off guards and snakes in an effort to reach the Sankara stone. It is easy to get "surprised" by a thug when Indy is walking left or right, because the game won't start scrolling until he is pretty close to the edge of the screen on some versions. When the guard appears, Indy has little or no time to react. To compensate for this, simply crack the whip every two or three steps. This way, should a guard appear, he stands a good chance of walking into a stinging rebuke from the swashbuckling scholar.

Once the trap door is located, the player must time the jump perfectly in order to grab the stone and escape to safety. On the first trip the doors move slower, giving Indy a chance to practice the motion. After this, timing is essential. Position Indy at the edge of the pit and flush against the wall. Once the door begins to open, get ready. The second the door starts closing, run for it. If done correctly, Indy will just make it and be off to the next level.

A Word About Mola Ram

After Indy reclaims the three Sankara stones, he must cross a narrow bridge as Mola Ram hurls fireballs at him. The only strategy here is a simple one: Keep moving and flog anything that breathes! This may seem like a cop-out, but once there it will become apparent that sharp reflexes, not strategy, are the recipe for destroying the high priest and bringing peace to the people of Mayapore.

—Frank Tetro



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On the Road with the Road Runner

Mindscape

Versions: Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

In Mindscape's home version of this Atari coin-op, the player is cast as the Road Runner, the mute but speedy protagonist of dozens of Chuck Jones-directed, Warner Bros. cartoons. Road Runner's mission: Pick up the birdseed while zipping along a series of mazelike open roadways, all the while evading the slavering jaws of that noted genius, Wile E. Coyote. The game features four different levels, each presenting unique obstacles for Roadie to overcome.

Level 1

Level 1 is pretty basic: Road Runner must scoot along a wide highway, scarfing up the precious birdseed. While RR proceeds, he must remain at least one step ahead of the ravenous coyote by moving in an up-and-down diagonal manner as he moves left. This has several advantages: The birdseed's location changes from top to bottom as the game goes on, so Road Runner will be less likely to miss any of the golden nuggets. Even more important, our feathered protagonist can only gain on Wile E. when moving diagonally.

The major obstacle on Level 1, aside from old Wile E. himself, are the Acme trucks that come barreling across the screen from the left and can flatten our avian hero into your basic cartoon pancake. The trick here is to listen closely for a horn which will sound a split second before the truck appears. The instant the sound is heard, stop running diagonally and be ready to move up or down to quickly get out of the way. Once the speeding truck passes, immediately move Road Runner behind it as it moves off the screen. Since Wile E. is programmed to follow in the same horizontal plane as the player/character, he will move right in front of the truck and—splat!—it's coyote flapjacks!

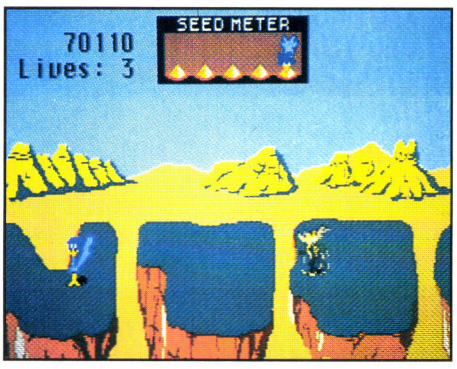
Level 2

Level 2 can get tricky because the previously straight road now begins to twist into a mass of hairpin turns as the game moves into mountainous terrain. If that wasn't bad enough, that crazy coyote is still dogging Road Runner's every step, flying overhead in the ever-popular Acme Rocket.

The key to navigating the mountain pass is sticking to the middle of the road. If Road Runner gets too close to the edges, he may get "stuck" on an edge and stop moving altogether. Whether or not this was meant to happen remains unknown, but it does, and it can be quite frustrating. Should this tragedy befall our hero, quickly rotate the stick in all directions, and he should pop free.

While traveling through the mountains, Wile E. will fly by horizontally from left to right and then back again. If Road Runner is in his path, he will be whisked away and devoured (off-screen, thankfully) by the fiendish coyote. The way to outsmart Wile E. here is to make sure Road Runner is next to a vertical path each time the coyote leaves the screen. If Wile E. reappears on the same level as Road Runner, simply move up or down to avoid the rocket and continue onward.

Rocks will begin to fall from the mountainside at the end of Level 2. Don't panic. As long as Road Runner keeps trucking to the left, they will never hit him. Just use the up-and-down diagonal strategy to grab the birdseed along the way, and our hero will be safe while Wile E. gets clobbered by the avalanche.



Level 3

Level 3 is dubbed the "Dead-End Trail." Here, Road Runner must navigate a mazelike landscape, choosing among different paths as he goes. One will allow him to continue, while the others are dead ends. The problem here is that selecting too many dead ends gives Wile E. time to catch up. If this happens, it becomes necessary to use the jump option. If Wile E. has our hero cornered, simply run at him and jump right before making contact. If executed correctly, Road Runner will vault over Wile E. and continue safely on. Meanwhile, the coyote will be forced to come to a stop, turn, then head in the other direction, giving Road Runner an opportunity to regain his lost lead.

At the end of Level 3, the player will encounter a set of cannons that fire into the road. These are very tricky and require precise timing to survive. Begin by positioning Road Runner right below the closest cannon and wait for it to fire. The instant it does, start running behind the cannonball. This gives Roadie the biggest jump before the next shot is fired. If the cannon RR is heading for discharges, simply jump over the cannonball. It's when the rear cannon fires again that there is a bit of a problem. If this occurs, wait until the shot is right behind Road Runner and jump while holding the stick to the bottom-left. If timed correctly, Road Runner will leap down and out of the path of the cannonball.

Level 4

The last level is a real cliffhanger (no pun intended): Road Runner must jump from cliff to cliff with Wile E. in hot pursuit.

Actually, this level isn't too difficult. Just remember to jump at the last second to give our hero maximum hang time. As long as Road Runner doesn't stop too often to smell the roses, Wile E. won't catch up and will more than likely fall off along the way.

Once he does fall, Wile E. will begin pursuit in a helipack, dropping dynamite down on the player/character. Just keep running left and the helipack will stall and send Wile E. plummeting once again. Alas, when will that crazy coyote learn not to trust Acme products?

Once Level 4 is complete, the game will restart back at Level 1. This time around, however, there will be land mines in the road which must be jumped or navigated around. Road Runner must be careful because Wile E. devilishly placed the mines close to the birdseed; one slight misstep and—BOOM!—the coyote finally wins one.

—Frank Tetro

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CONSUMER ELECTRONIC SHOW (CONFIDENTIAL)

by Arnie Katz

(Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games.)

"So, what do you think of the show?" asked Bill Kunkel. That's what everyone wants me to tell them at the biennial Consumer Electronics Show. Of course, not everyone asks just as I buckle my seatbelt for the flight to Chicago.

My ace collaborator was the first to inquire, but he was hardly the last. People intone "So, what do you think of the show?" like a mantra from press day on Friday until exhibitors crate the last remaining booth.

Aisle after aisle of ostentatious displays, the blare of a thousand car-stereo demonstrations, the murmur of seductive booth hostesses; these are the sights and sounds that mean "CES" to most of the 80,000 browsers who stream through the entrances at McCormick Place.

The word "booth" doesn't adequately convey the grandeur of some of these constructions. Some are two or even three stories tall, have extensive conference rooms and armies of greeters. At one time, voluptuous hostesses beckoned from nearly every display, but computer companies now soft-pedal sex appeal and let the products take center stage. It's less distracting, but maybe not quite as much fun for oglers.

Premiums and giveaways are always a feature of the CES. The industry makes sure that no one lacks pins, T-shirts and plastic shopping bags. Nothing gladdens a company president's heart like a hall full of people wearing buttons that extol his hot, new product.

Some companies go beyond buttons and bags. Drinkware is currently in vogue. After CES, Katz Kunkel Worley will never have to buy another beer glass, mug or stadium cup again. My favorite prize from the June show is a black sweatshirt with a big "Epyx" design on the back and my name in orange script on the front.

McCormick Hall is the center of CES, but a lot of action takes place miles from the exhibit hall. The makers and shakers of entertainment software gather in luxury hotel suites, jammed coffee shops and even on street corners to wheel and deal. The gaudy booths are for image or building a distribution network. Established companies already have both. They target specific people for meetings, generally retail buyers, game designers and developers, media folks and potential investors.

Everyone's CES is different. Joyce Worley, Bill Kunkel and I wear several hats, so ours start earlier and run longer than for the typical store buyer or trade magazine reporter.

The lavish opening ceremony, with windblown band and gusty speeches, is Saturday morning. No one waits for the official opening. After a delay-ridden Thursday afternoon flight, we were in Chicago and ready for action.

The true CES art form is the meeting. For two weeks prior to the show, the telephone never stops ringing, as people plan business meals and meetings that start any time from sunrise to the witching hour.

Meeting-mania sometimes overwhelms the unwary. Some hardcore meeting mavens never leave their hotel during the entire show. For five or six days, room service is all that stands between them and starvation.

Our meeting calendar includes both journalistic and professional appointments. As VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT editors, we need to see all the new products. As partners in Katz Kunkel Worley, we must talk with advice seekers and companies in the market for our game designs. That works out to about ten meetings a day from Friday through Tuesday morning. The hall is nearly deserted by then, so we can visit all the booths we missed earlier.

Our first meeting, Thursday evening, is always with our longtime friend and representative, Barry Friedman, of the International Computer Group. Heaps of the house specialty at Carson's For Ribs are a perfect accompaniment to discussions of trends, rumors and strategy for the next five days. Barry Friedman is our ideal first meeting. He has an encyclopedic vision of electronic gaming, he's a delightful conversationalist and he generally has good news of impending projects for us. Dreams of mansions and French maids always put me in the right frame of mind for the nonstop tumult of CES.

Evening parties let CES goers mix socializing with low-key business. Parties peaked during the Golden Age of Video Games in the early 1980s. Although the winter CES, held in January in Las Vegas, has a bigger reputation for after-dark merriment, Chicago has had its moments. Still fresh in memory after a half-decade are Odyssey's Second City Shows. I'll never forget watching Stuart Pankin play me in a skit.

Few of today's game publishers want the cost or the hassle of entertaining a town-sized group. Only Mindscape, who had a rock-music bash starring Meatloaf, has that old-time flair.

The summer Consumer Electronics Show turns business executives into tribal shamans. Stuck halfway between the

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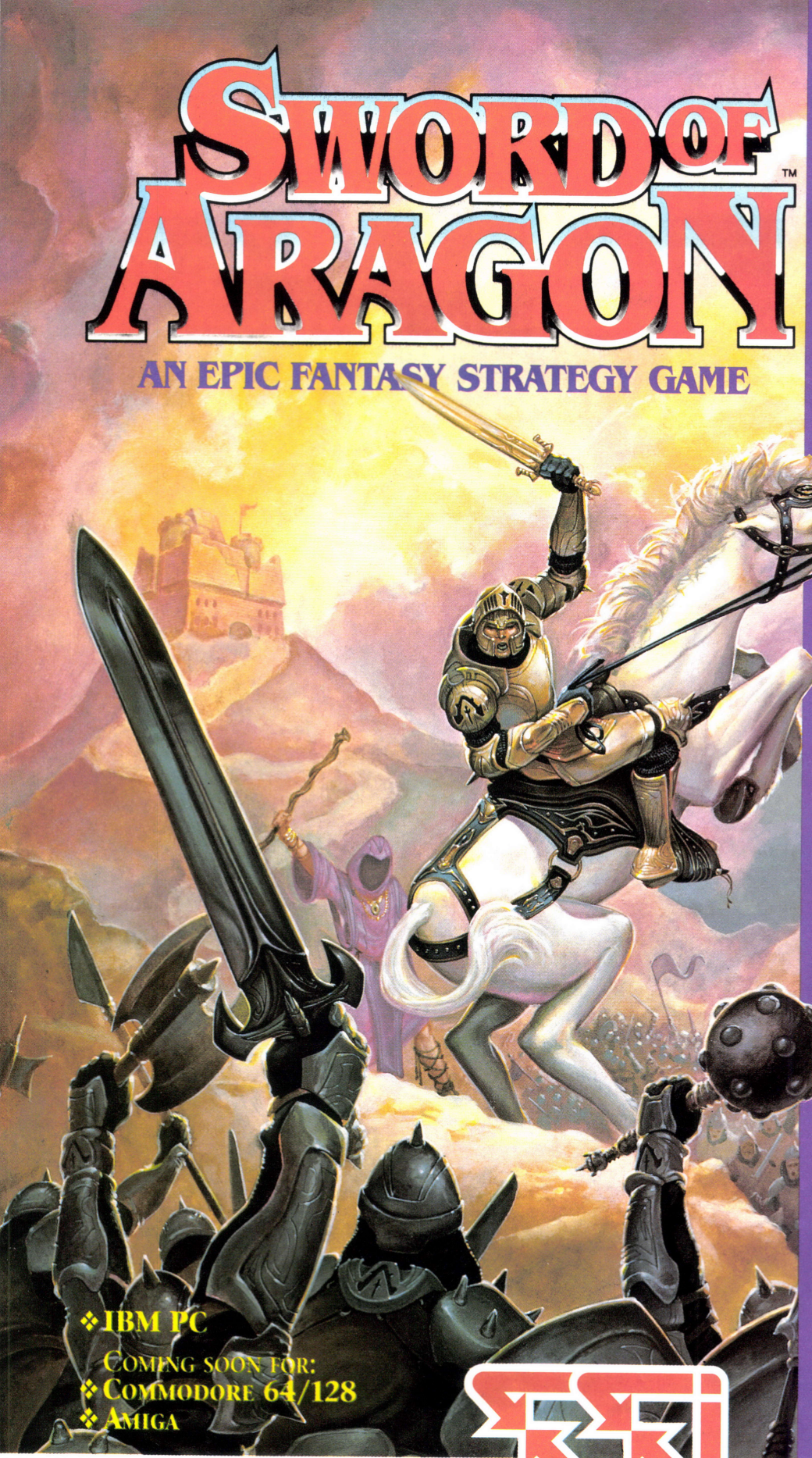

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last holiday season and the next, they search this show of shows for portents of prosperity to come.

The first day of CES is the time to take the industry's pulse. It isn't hard, since most executives wear their emotions on their sleeves. The first few meetings trashed all my preconceptions. I knew video-game companies would be delirious, but I expected software people to sing the blues over last Christmas' inventory clog.

Instead, optimism was rampant. A few larger companies are still skating along the edge of disaster, but most believe that better games with more universal appeal can overcome the sales slowdown.

CES has no shortage of signs. The most obvious one at the 1989 event was the stupifying size of what has come to be known as "Nintendo City." On the pearl-gray carpet behind its sheltering walls stand booths for all of Nintendo's software satellites and for the video-game giant itself.

Propelled by Christmas 1988's success, Nintendo City annexed several more big chunks of the hall in June. Tengen's booth, though well situated, is discreetly separate from its archenemy's turf.

The balance of power is fragile, however, and the astute CES-goer learns to read telltale signals like Tonto trailing a cattle rustler. This time, Nintendo City morale is not, as expected, uniformly high. Third-party software companies look prosperous, but the mood at Nintendo's own displays is not all sunny.

Every visitor senses the pride in the success of the NES and its software in America, but uncertainty taints some of the smiles. There is fear of competition from Sega's Genesis and NEC's TurboGrafx-16. Worse, Nintendo's portable Game Boy has collided with CES's hottest product, the Atari-distributed Lynx (see feature article on page 20).

Nintendo, who claims that it won't have a 16-bit console for the U.S. until 1991, is understandably nervous about anything that threatens its current dominance. Possibly because of past battles for the video-game dollar, Nintendo folk appear more worried about NEC than Sega.

The NEC contingent's high morale is contagious. A tour of NEC's Chicago headquarters, conducted by Carol Balkcom, suggests heavy commitment to the TurboGrafx-16. The video-game division is impressively enormous, and the people behind the desks seem to know what they are doing, too.

NEC must be talking software deals with half the industry. That gives a lot of CES attendees a strong rooting interest. If good wishes were sales, nothing could stop the TurboGrafx-16. Even so, NEC has clearly impressed the industry with its machine and software.

Regarding Atari's battle, I knew that the Lynx had won the first round of the fight on Sunday afternoon when I ran into an executive of Epyx, the company that invented the unit and sold marketing rights to Atari, in Nintendo City. I had never seen a smile, much less a look of transcendental ecstasy, on this man's face. Selling out the first run of 140,000 units does that to a person.

CES isn't exactly Army boot camp, but each show has its casualties. Bad shrimp at a reception once kayoed a half-dozen reporters who had hoped to combine business with a free dinner, and too much late-night partying always produces a zombielike appearance for some of the people walking around McCormick Hall the next day.

At CES, voices hover on the brink of laryngitis. The noise of music from the booths and 30,000 or so conversations forces people to talk louder. By Tuesday, throats are raw. Everyone feels like they've just been to the longest and most exciting Notre Dame game in history.

Dr. Mike Breggar, a podiatrist when not producing computer games, gives lots of free consultations at CES. Miles of hotel corridors and the unyielding exhibit hall floors are murder on the feet. More than one woman who dazzles in elegantly high heels on Saturday shuffles in sneakers on the last day. Joyce Worley's CES wish is for a sedan chair and bearers.

Physical injury sometimes strikes. I limped through the last day of the 1987 CES in Las Vegas after my ankle collapsed as I stepped jauntily from the entrance of Caesar's Palace. Bill and Joyce thought that I should have watched the curb, but the two women wearing leather mini dresses and carrying whips were more interesting.

Bob Jacob, president of Cinemaware, traded a hospitality suite for a hospital bed at CES. His broken ankle kept him from reaping the full measure of praise earned by *It Came from the Desert*. It is not true that the injury occurred while Bob was demonstrating the take-off sequence from *Rocket Ranger*.

While Bill, Joyce and I analyze CES, the industry draws its conclusions about us. There's no thrill like hearing someone quote from VG&CE or comment enthusiastically about one of our games on display. The only thing better than praise for a completed project is the prospect of a new one. Since publishers love a good track record better than home cooking, the more of the former we get, the more of the latter are offered to us for the future.

Some may wonder what we do at CES when not meeting (or sleeping or eating). This may sound a little crazy, but Joyce, Bill and I sit in a hotel room and concoct article ideas and new computer games to the radio's rock beat. After 15 hours of nonstop computer and video gaming, we're so energized that we babble at each other until the adrenaline high fades. We've come up with some real winners under these unusual conditions, though no one will ever read our proposed treatise on "Games for Lefthanders" or play *Fish in a Barrel*. Maybe next month, I'll tell you where we get our usable ideas.

The next CES is only three months away as you read this. You know, I can hardly wait.

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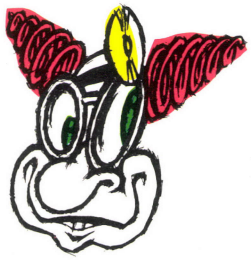

Questions, Questions, Questions! Not to Mention Answers, Answers, Answers

by The Game Doctor

The toughest thing about being a Game Doctor is the folks you *can't* help. Invariably, more letters flood through my mailbox than I can answer. Since we can't print every query, the Doc's small but zealous staff tirelessly ferrets out the best and most interesting questions from each month's mailbag. Here's the latest batch to cross the Doc's examining table.

Q: Of all the new game topics that have been on the gaming market, I have yet to see a global thermonuclear warfare simulator. What's the deal here? I'm sure a game like this has crossed programmers' minds.

—Kevin McKalpain
Oak Park, Michigan

A: Actually, the idea *has* occurred to designers over the years, but there have been a few problems. For one thing, once the bombs start falling, there isn't much game time left. Most politically-oriented games, like Chris Crawford's *Balance of Power* (Mindscape) or J. Wilson's *Global Commander* (Datasoft), are based around the idea of *preventing* nuclear holocaust.

But, if it's thermonuclear war you've just *got* to have, you may be able to dig up a copy of the old Thorn-EMI game, *Defcon* or the more visually sophisticated *S.D.I.* from Cinemaware.

Q: I live in a small town in northern British Columbia (population under 2000). I purchased a Nintendo Entertainment System about five weeks ago. This community has no store which specializes in computer and/or video-game software.

Our local video rental store has started renting Nintendo and Sega units and game packs. I originally thought this was just great because a person could try a game out before spending $60-$75 for it. I began having misgivings about renting game packs when a couple I rented gave me trouble. At first I thought it was my machine, so I telephoned the Nintendo Service Center in Ontario and they told me, "Absolutely under no circumstances use rented *or* borrowed game packs!" Their reason for opposing this practice is that you do not know how they have been treated. They could be damaged and/or dirty, and using them could damage your machine.

My first thought when they told me all this was: "Of course they are going to say that because they want me and everybody else to *buy* the game packs, not rent them." Having said all that, what is your opinion concerning the rental of game packs? Do rental games harm the NES and, if so, how?

These are the problems I experienced: graphics were distorted (the games would play, but some things were hard to make out); words were misspelled and rows of letters sometimes filled the screen. Pushing the reset button or removing and reinserting the game did not fix the problem. The only way I could get the games to work properly was by pushing down on one corner of the game pack with my finger when the pack was inserted into the NES slot. Is the problem with those particular game packs or could it be my machine?

—L. Anderson
Ft. Nelson, B.C., Canada

A: I suspect the problem is not your NES, but rather the rental

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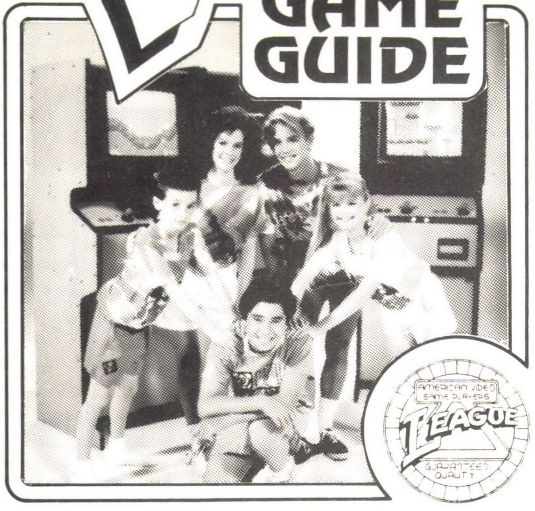

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games you're using. Frankly, while reading your letter, my mind drifted back about a decade to the days when Atari assured consumers that using Activision cartridges in the 2600 could damage the system. In this case, however, the Nintendo service folks were being fairly straight with you—dirty game cartridges *are* a major problem for the NES and other video-game systems.

Here's what happens: the metal contacts in the cartridge tend to acquire dust and dirt from frequent play. This is especially likely to happen to a rental unit which will probably be played anywhere from ten to 25 times as much as a privately-owned game. Why? Because when you buy a game pack, you tend to play the heck out of it, then play it less and less as time goes on. Rental cartridges, however, go through the heavy-use cycle over and over. The fact that the games you had problems with worked when you pushed down on them tends to confirm this diagnosis. The contacts are probably dirty and are not making clean contact with the system. When you push down on the cartridge, better contact is made and the game works.

This is not to say that the Doc is necessarily opposed to the idea of video-game—and, yes, even computer software—rentals. Considering the high price of game software and the poor distribution these items get in many retail outlets, this could be an acceptable way for a player to see a wide variety of games. Also, I must tell you that I get *very* few letters such as yours. Most renters seem perfectly happy with the system.

To eliminate your problem, however, you might want to give the folks at Doc's Fix-A-Game a ring (no, I have no connection with these folks) at (800) 882-4263. They make a variety of products, including a Cartridge Cleaning Kit that should help remove that nasty dust and dirt from your contact strips.

Q: I wanted to know if games for the Atari ST will work on the 7800.
—Matt Corder
Spring Hills, Kansas

A: Sorry. The ST uses a 3.5" floppy disk and the 7800 only takes cartridges (2600 or 7800 format).

Send any questions and comments to: The Game Doctor, P.O. Box 020541, Brooklyn, NY 11202, and I'll see you all next issue!

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President, MicroProse

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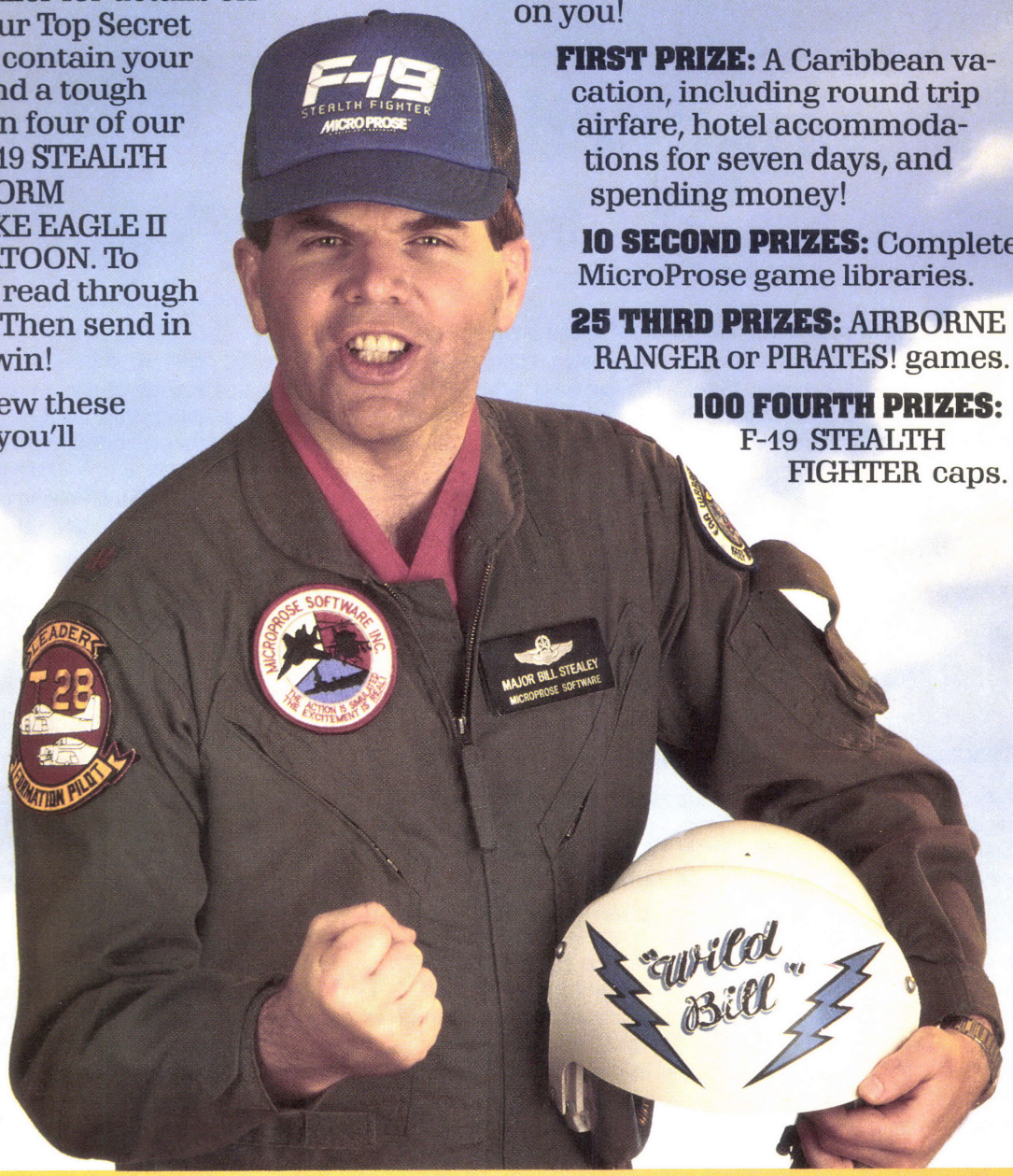

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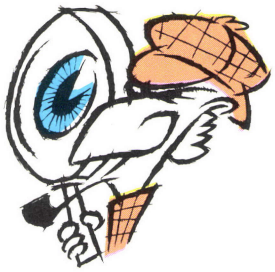


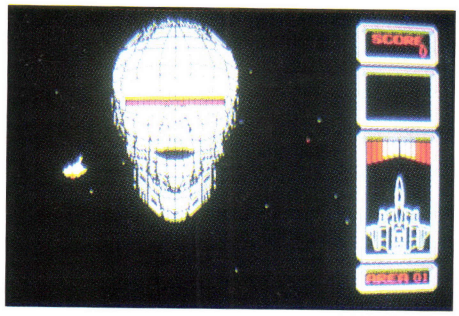
REVIEWS

Silpheed

Sierra

Versions: Apple IIGS ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

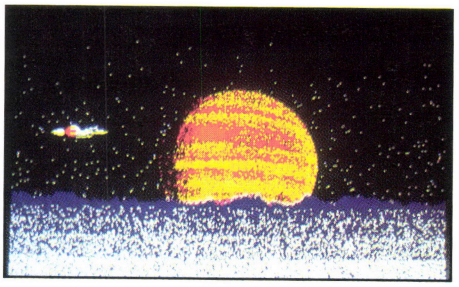
Silpheed is, at once, both remarkable and ordinary. On one hand, it represents Sierra's long-awaited return to publishing arcade action games. The company gave us such classics as *Jawbreaker, Crossfire* and *Oil's Well*, but recently has been involved exclusively with adventure games and flight simulators. Sierra's return to these roots is welcome news for the company and its fans. On the other hand, *Silpheed* was not designed by Sierra hands but by S. Uesaka and H. Godai of Game Arts, the Japanese game creators who produced *Thexder*.



Japan has had a heavy influence on the latest video- and computer-game rage, and *Silpheed* is a good demonstration.

Silpheed is, from a technical point of view, the hottest action game ever to enter the IBM PC universe. The graphics are near-arcade quality in EGA mode (though the box lists the game as also being VGA-compatible, this option was never offered during the installation phase). Better still, the play action is instantaneous. Most IBM PC games must run through an entire cycle after the user enters in a fire command before the action is inaugurated on-screen. The game boasts 20 play levels, dozens of different enemy aircraft, nine original musical themes and the ability to customize one's fighter craft as the game progresses.

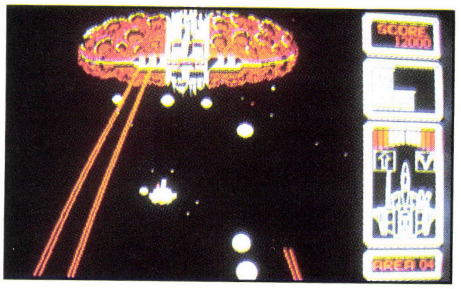
The game also tenders a somewhat experimental visual perspective. The user's ship is visible at the bottom of the screen and can move left, right, up and down, while enemy ships appear from the top of the playfield and sweep down. The entire point of view is tilted slightly, however, presenting the action at an oblique angle which creates a sense of depth that is almost three-dimensional.



Lavishly designed backgrounds dot the intense space action in Sierra's *Silpheed*.

Strengths admitted, from a design perspective *Silpheed* is a tired rehash of ideas that were popular in arcade games back in the early '80s. Players shoot at the incoming aliens. Some of the ships, upon exploding, issue forth floating cards bearing different letters. If the player's ship can capture these cards before they float off-screen, they add a variety of powers to the ship. The cards include a weapon power up, which increases destructive power; speed up; auto fire; smart bombs; a repair command; and other similar bonuses. At the beginning of every level, from level 2 on, the player can select a left and right weapon. These include the basic forward beam, a phalanx beam, V-beam, laser cannon and auto-aim.

Silpheed marks the anticipated return of Sierra On-Line to arcade-type game publishing.



Despite a somewhat hackneyed conception, *Silpheed* deserves to hit big. In particular, its technical wizardry should give IBM gamers a kind of kick they have never before experienced on that system. *Silpheed* is a powerful piece of work and a welcome return to the arcade wars for Sierra. Now how about trying one yourselves, folks?

—Bill Kunkel

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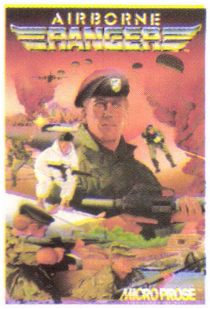

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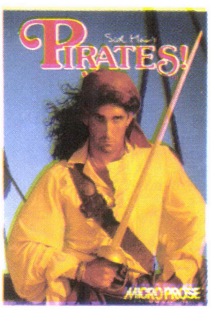

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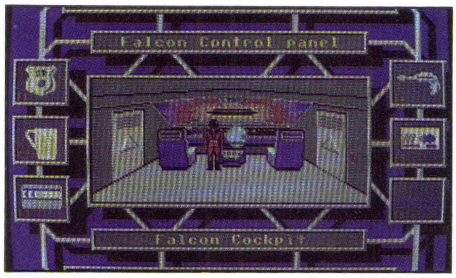
Omnicron Conspiracy

Epyx

Versions: IBM PC ($49.95)

Ace Powers, a star police captain, is summoned from a sultry dream by his PAL (personal automatic link) robotic assistant. No more time for rest; Ace must get the spaceship *Falcon* in gear and head for the planet Cron on a vital mission. PAL provides the first set of coordinates, Ace programs the star course on the Falcon control panel and both set off on a graphically exquisite and highly entertaining science-fiction adventure.

From the moment *Omnicron Conspiracy* is booted, it is obvious something special is about to happen. Any IBM graphics mode may be selected from the opening menu: Hercules (monochrome) through EGA and MCGA. The title screen, a beautiful star scene, introduces the game, and a stunning musical score is one of the best ever to tinkle forth from the IBM's tinny speaker.



Powers' spaceship, the *Falcon*, is well equipped to take Ace through the 250 locations in this adventure game.

Omnicron is controled with either a keyboard or joystick. The user interface, laid out in a logical fashion, keeps the game quite playable using either control method, even on a fast AT-compatible. (Many games on a fast PC or PC-AT are virtually unplayable with a joystick unless the computer is first slowed down.)

The player controls Ace Powers, who has over 250 locations to explore on his mission to uncover the *Omnicron Conspiracy*. There appears to be a plot to spread illegal drugs throughout the galaxy. But who are the perpetrators? What other evils might Ace uncover in his journeys? There is a lot more adventure than the arcade-style game play might imply.

The game screen is similar to the "trapulators" employed in the *Spy vs. Spy* games, also from First Star Software, *Omnicron*'s designer. In the center of the display, occupying about half the total screen space, is a rectangular view of the field. Generally, a side view of Ace Powers and his adventuring environment is presented. When navigating the ship from the Falcon control panel, a first-person perspective is used. Occasionally, when Ace "interfaces" with certain people, a close-up view (just like the movies) is presented. The diverse views imbue *Omnicron Conspiracy* with a cinematic effect that enhances its entertainment value.

There are elevators, corridors, rooms and secret passages to discover and explore, and, as with all adventure games, certain items are key to progress. Three boxes are displayed on each side of the main field of view, labeled F1 through F6, and controlled by the function keys. Each box represents a pocket in which an item may be carried such as a badge, metacard—"Don't leave home without it"—and ALSWELL (automatic laser system with energy light load), a gun for blasting bad guys.

At the top of the screen is a horizontal "rest bar" which shrinks as Ace becomes fatigued; our hero requires an occasional nap. If allowed to pass out from exhaustion, Ace has another adventure on his hands: He must recover his ALSWELL and metacard from those who pilfered them.

At the bottom of the display is the "life" bar that indicates Ace's life expectancy. There are many creative ways for Ace to meet an early demise. Fortunately, the Falcon's medical sensors know when Ace has been damaged. The Falcon will automatically beam him up so the nurse droid can attempt to resuscitate him. This works a couple of times per game.

The player must avoid the temptation to shoot first and ask questions later; Ace Powers is not above the law. Recognizing the bad guy sometimes means that the player must wait until he is shot at first. Fortunately, Ace can withstand a few laser blasts, but he must react quickly.

When the player comes in contact with a character, a dialogue may take place, at which point a small interaction menu pops up. There is no parser in this game: Only logical interactions that the game understands are available, such as "converse." This may turn off advanced adventure game players, but most will find that it enhances game play by eliminating frustrating trial-and-error commands to a user-hostile parser. Sometimes the characters offer hints, insults or a taste of their own blaster. Each character is unique and well defined, and after a few games, they become quite recognizable; the player will know the proper actions to take.

The manual is very complete. Instructions for installation on a hard drive are included, but the program is "keydisk" protected. (The original disk must be in one of the floppy drives when it is run from the hard drive.) Five pages of the manual are dedicated to game-playing hints and solutions, a very nice feature. It is brief in content, so as not to spoil all of the elements of surprise, but is quite helpful in solving important puzzles in the adventure.

Omnicron Conspiracy is a spoof of many popular science-fiction themes. It's humorous, entertaining and a lot of fun to play. It's a highly stimulating game of space adventuring and sleuthing for beginner-to-intermediate-level adventurists.

—Matthew Ratcliff

Epyx, 600 Galveston Drive, Redwood City, CA 94063; (415) 366-0606.

Star Saga One: Beyond The Boundary

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Versions: Apple II ($79.95), Apple IIGS ($79.95), IBM PC ($79.95), Macintosh ($79.95)

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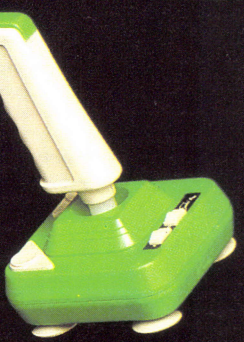

Micro-switch control, 2 auto-fires.

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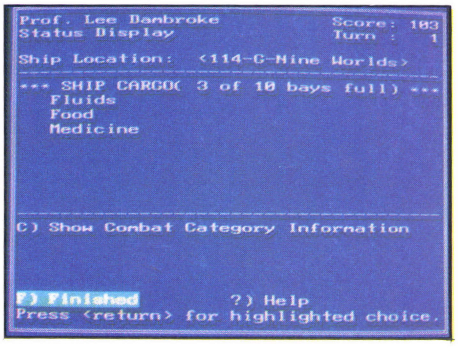
ary around their nine colonized worlds. This border was established after a severe space plague threatened mankind's existence in 2490 A.D. Currently, travel is possible to the galactic fringe just outside the boundary, but only with the stipulation that those leaving may never return. Consequently, the fringe is full of an odd assortment of people from scientists to pirates. It's as much a frontier as the Wild West was in its heyday.

Star Saga One: Beyond the Boundary bills itself as an interstellar, interactive, role-playing space opera. Translated, that means a quite original multi-player, multimedia computer role-playing game. The contestant may adopt the persona of one of six pregenerated characters. Each of these has a unique history and personality traits ranging from criminal tendencies to religious fanaticism. The sextet represents a wide range of professions: pilot, priest, smuggler, mystic, professor and engineer. Some of the character goals are not well defined at the beginning of the game and must be "discovered" as the game progresses.

Star Saga eschews the somewhat common theme of galactic conquest and seemingly endless combat. Instead, it focuses on exploration related to the character's goals and the economic trade necessary to keep him or her viable. Character development consists of improvement of personal offensive and defensive capabilities (via armor and weapons) and an upgrade of one's vessel. There are no hit points involved, and although combat is more bloodless than players have come to expect lately, it is handled smoothly in keeping with the rest of the game's operating system.

Star Saga One throws you into the depths of outer space and tests your trading skills.



Game play is straightforward. Each turn, the player picks the next step of his or her on-screen protagonist. Game tokens are moved over a full-color galactic map gameboard, to keep track of each player's position, and the moves are also entered into the computer. The computer-guide tells that player the location of a text passage to be read, keeps track of all the accomplishments of each persona and resolves the effect of the move on the universe.

Star Saga is definitely not a linear game which forces players to complete all action in a given area before proceeding to the next. Travelers have myriad options in the establishment of successful trade routes and the manner in which they choose to pursue their ultimate goals. The computerized game master does provide subtle nudges here and there, however, to keep players from losing sight of those goals.

Naturally, the game is best when played with others, due to the interaction it generates; but solitary play is also exciting and challenging. Furthermore, once the game has been completed as one character, the player can choose to continue exploration and discovery with that persona or begin a new game with one of the others. Each one's goals are so different that every playing session holds new possibilities and excitement.

The universe the players occupy is well constructed and of truly epic proportion: It is detailed in 13 separate booklets with a combined total of 624 pages. It is somewhat imposing to begin a game with a group of manuals that weighs several pounds. Fortunately, it is not necessary to read all these entries in the course of any game. Instead, the descriptions form a set of personified reference atlases to guide the players during the course of the game.

The average complete game lasts about 75 hours, but game saves are easy. More important, the game allows characters to be temporarily suspended or added at any point, without inhibiting play whatsoever. This feature, combined with the fact that individual turns may be accomplished quickly while others are still checking the results of their own turns, creates a rare combination: a fast-paced, user-friendly, multi-player game.

The authors of *Star Saga One*—Andrew (*Wizardry*) Greenberg, Michael Massimilla, Rick Dutton and Walt Freitag—say this game is only the first of a trilogy. By the time players have invested the hundreds of hours necessary to fully explore the universe in *Star Saga One: Beyond the Boundary*, MasterPlay will be ready to continue the quest. *Star Saga Two* is currently in development. Until then, may the solar winds be at your back and the high road rise up to meet you in your journeys along the galactic fringe.

As you can see, the materials provided for *Star Saga One: Beyond the Boundary* are quite comprehensive.

—H. E. Dille

MasterPlay, 8417 Sun State St., Tampa, FL 33614; (813) 888-7773.

War in Middle Earth

Melbourne House

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Apple IIGS ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

Several publishers have tried to recreate the magic of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings,* but the sweep and scale of the fantasy epic has always defeated traditional simulation techniques. Synergistic Software has easily done the best job so far, thanks to its unique multilevel play format.

War in Middle Earth uses variable scale, real-time action and digitized graphics, and an icon-based control scheme simulates all the action of Middle Earth from the clash of armies to individual character interaction. As in the trilogy, victory requires destruction of the One Ring in the flames of Mt. Doom to deny Sauron its power. The player can either gather the Fellowship and follow Frodo's route in the books or attempt to discover a new path to triumph. (For instance, it is possible to win without visiting the Ents or enlisting the aid of Gollum.)

The computerist battles both Sauron's evil minions and the press of time to accomplish the mission; time is the greater foe. The play-

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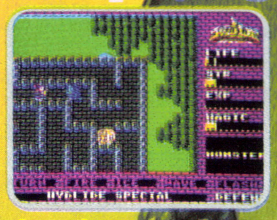
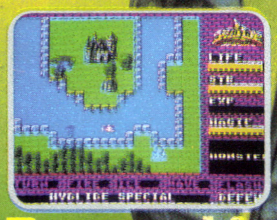


Action-adventure



Password feature

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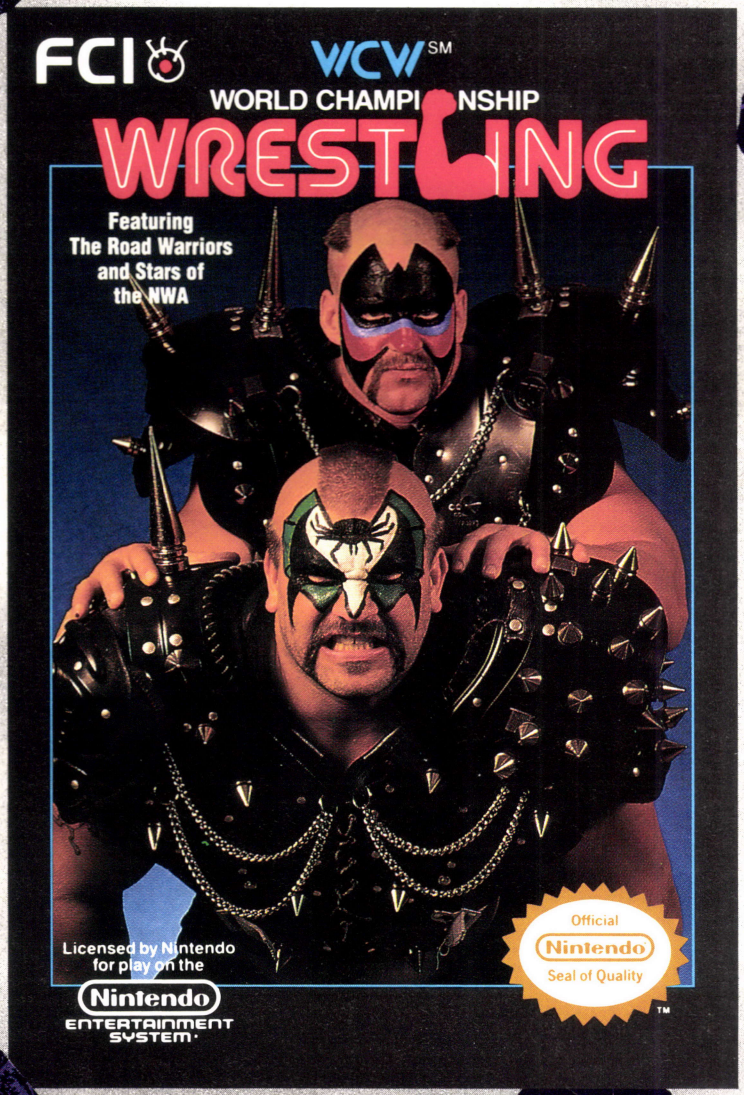

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er's allies begin the game scattered across the land, but only Gandalf or the receipt of a special gift can rouse them to action. Any player who doesn't marshal all allies and set up defensive positions early will be overrun by the first enemy attack. During battle, the player can order a unit to do one of four things: charge, engage, withdraw or retreat. Skirmishes are decided based on the strength and defensive terrain of the forces involved.

The program offers three levels of play. The user can survey the whole situation on the full map, control armies on the command

The overhead maps help you see the locations of your enemies, plan out your battle strategies and plot your course to Mt. Doom.

level or manipulate the heroes in the side-perspective animation level.

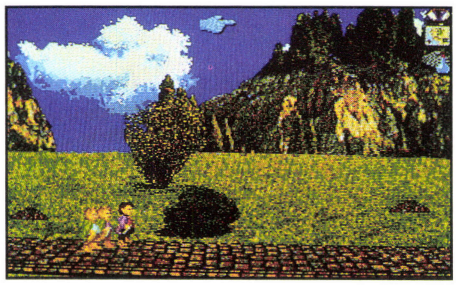
On the animation level, individual characters gain information from the wise and find useful objects. Impressive digitized graphics provide a detailed background for the characters as they walk along a path or camp for the night.

On the full map level, players can oversee all of the forces and easily study regions distant from the party's current position. Other strategic military simulations should adopt this feature, since it eliminates a lot of tedious scrolling.

Most of the game's action takes place at command level. It is on this level that the computer moves parties, splits up groups, adds characters to existing parties and bring new forces into play during the course of the game.

While the computerist can use a joystick or mouse for most phases of *War in Middle Earth*, it is impossible to play the game without at least some minor keyboard input. It is necessary for such operations as quitting or muting the music.

Half of the documentation is devoted to a synopsis of Middle Earth history. This is a thoughtful inclusion, though it is marred by



Fans of Tolkien's fantasy books and characters will immediately take to *The War in Middle Earth*.

typographical errors and minor inaccuracies.

War in Middle Earth is a role-playing/military-strategy hybrid which is most suitable for those who are not usually rabid fans of either category. Poor artificial intelligence makes the robot opposition too repetitive and predictable for a hardened wargamer, while the characters aren't quantified in as great detail as in titles like *Pool of Radiance* or *Bard's Tale*.

But as a total gaming experience, *War in Middle Earth* is appealing for fantasy lovers in general and admirers of Tolkien's trilogy in particular. It is easy to play, has excellent graphics and captures the flavor of *Lord of the Rings*.

—Vince Puglia

Virgin Mastertronic, 711 West 17th St., Suite G9, Costa Mesa, CA 92627; (714) 631-1001.

Time Bandit (Version 2.1)

Microdeal

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

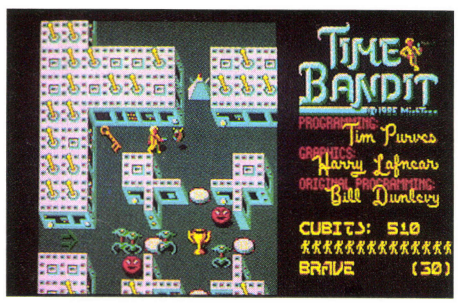
Subtitled "The Adventure Arcade," Dunlevy and Lafnear's *Time Bandit* is based on a fascinating and novel concept: an adventure landscape where each location is a different mini-game. A legitimate classic, *Time Bandit* is like a many-faceted jewel: Each subsequent look reveals new delights. Though the excellent Atari ST version has been available for several years, the IBM PC version is a major new addition to the PC-compatible game library.

The player is cast as a titular Time Bandit, one of the soldiers of fortune who move freely through time and space in search of adventure and treasure. The game is set in Timegates, a kind of focal point for the various realities, through which the user(s) can

Whether you like graphic adventures, arcade action or classics like *Pac-Man*, you'll find something strikes your fancy in *Time Bandit*.

visit dozens of different game areas. There are six time periods: medieval Fantasy Land, the Old West, the Future, Ancient Egypt, Deep Space and Arcadia. Each period has 16 lands, many of which include upper and lower levels.

Each land is represented by a portal, which serves as its entrance point. Moving into a portal transports the player/character into the game that land comprises, along with whatever evil guardians are trapped at the time of the player/character's appearance. Some of these mini-games are tiny, text-based puzzle dungeons, complete with simple parsers that allow the player to access objects and answer questions. Others are straightforward action/strategy games and, in Arcadia's Shadow Land, there's even a *Pac-Man*-style maze-chase contest. A wide range of gaming skills are required, since



Microdeal's *Time Bandit* is a potpourri of game genres combined into one.

there are crucial objects and bits of information scattered throughout this micro-universe.

Once inside a land (comprised of an action/strategy game) the

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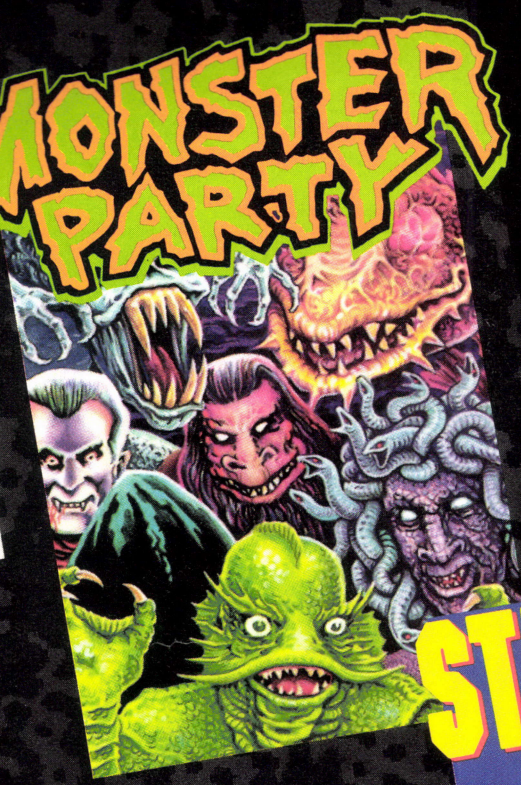

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WILD BOYS

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player/character is relentlessly pursued by the evil guardians through mazelike corridors until he finds a key and takes it to the blinking lock. Meanwhile, the maze is apt to contain clues, objects and instructions which must be investigated, while the on-screen character tries to avoid destruction at the Guardians' hands.

An especially welcome feature of *Time Bandit* is the Dual Play option. This allows two gamers to simultaneously compete, with each player having the ability to interact, for good or ill, with the opposition.

The multi-directional scrolling and tiny graphics are all smoothly wrought, and the new IBM PC version, by Purves and Lafnear, is an especially delightful surprise. It contains all the elements that made *Time Bandit* so successful on the ST and Amiga. Microdeal even makes a joystick adapter cable which allows any standard Atari joystick—the kind of controller *Time Bandit* was designed to be played with—to be easily interfaced with an IBM PC.

Time Bandit is a splendid achievement that should prove as delightful to the IBM PC segment of the computer marketplace as it has to Atari ST and Amiga owners.

—Bill Kunkel

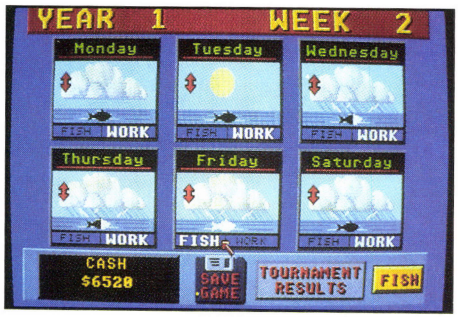
MicroDeal, 576 S. Telegraph, Pontiac, MI 48053; (313) 334-5700.

Reel Fish'n

Interstel

Versions: IBM PC ($49.95), Amiga ($44.95), Atari ST ($44.95)

This is *not* "ol' lazy summer days at the holler with a bamboo pole and bent pin," Son. This is real work. Roger Damon, the author of this bass-fishing simulation, spells it out: "The largemouth bass is one of the most unpredictable freshwater game fishes around.... Finding, then catching, this character requires concentration, understanding, creativity, knowledge, luck and a few other things. It's usually not easy and sometimes not fun. It's a game of odds."



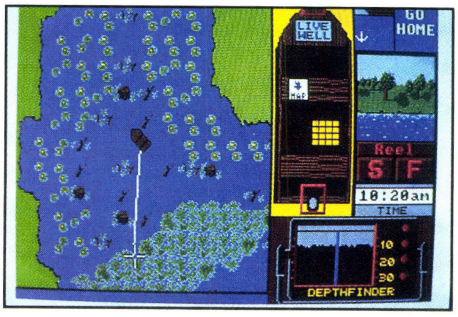
The weather helps you determine the best fishing climate, then you decide whether to work or fish.

Reel Fish'n simulates just about everything but the mosquitos and the sunburn, to bring bass fishing to the computer screen. Possibly the most whimsical element is the requirement that the gamer obtain a fishing license at the beginning of play by entering a validation word from the manual. Other than that, the program tries to realistically recreate the fishing experience.

There are 20 good bass-fishing weeks in the year. Alas, even in this simulation, it's not possible to just cast cares aside and answer the call of the wild. The amount of money available depends on balancing industriousness with fishing time. It costs a certain amount to fish on any of the available lakes, to buy lures, rent boats or to obtain any other equipment.

The fishing day really begins in the kitchen. Here the fisherman checks the weather update on the radio and gets the fishing tip of the week from *The Bass Book*. The anxious angler can also look over the fishing log (which charts his or her progress up through the previous week) and, most important, select from the map which of the eight available lakes (each with its own rates and characteristics) to fish that day. The tackle shop is just an optional stop on the way to the lake for an already well-equipped sportsman. The new fisherman has no lures in his tackle box, so this must be the first investment. There are 16 types, all described thoroughly in the manual, each suitable for different fishing techniques.

At the lake, the left side of the screen presents the shoreline and pier with the boat in an overhead view. The right side of the screen



Reel Fish'n takes you out on the lake and lets you cast for tough-to-catch bass.

contains a schematic of the boat with its live well for fish caught, anchor, tackle box and motors (gas and electric). Also pictured is the lake map, plus a clock and a reel-speed indicator. If the angler owns a depthfinder, its screen is visible at the bottom of this section.

The computerist can use a joystick, keyboard or (the preferred method) mouse control to steer the boat to a suitable site on the lake. (The depthfinder, if there is one, takes a little of the luck out of finding a likely location.) The maneuver takes some practice to avoid going in circles or bumping into the shore. Once the rod 'n' reeler picks a spot and drops anchor, bait is chosen: The tackle box opens to display a collection of lures. The line is then cast to the spot in the water selected by the cursor. The compu-caster must pick a point that can be reached without crossing an obstacle or the line will snag. If this happens, it must be cut and results in loss of the lure.

Retrieving the cast lure gets its own screen. The rod and line, visible in the main window, are mouse-controlled. In a small underwater view in the corner, the lure's action is seen as it is drawn back toward the boat. This is a nice display of how differently these fish-enticers move in the water.

Compu-fishers who stay with it long enough to develop good skills may compete in tournaments. These three-day events are held at one of the lakes each week of the fishing season. They cost $500 to enter, but the prizes are very attractive. If the player ranks third or better in one of the weekly tournies, there are invitational tournaments during the fifth and 15th weeks. With attractive purses, the object may not just be to win the tournament. Like every real-life reeler, there are costly dreams of more lures, better equipment, a depthfinder and perhaps even a special boat.

The graphics, especially those for the Atari ST version, are excellent. (*Reel Fish'n* was originally released for the Atari ST under the name of *Gone Fish'n*.) By comparison, the CGA version for IBM PC machines looks diagrammatic, and in the Tandy 1000 series,

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16-color graphics are not supported.

The lake scene is particularly good-looking, studded with lilypads, tree stumps and other line-snagging debris. The on-screen scale that weighs the fish is an appealing depiction of the catch of the day. On the other hand, the equipment is not too attractive. The lures are large and clunky and do not reveal the elegantly delicate

Before you head out in your boat, you have to stock up with gear from the tackle shop.

beauty that makes these hand-crafted devices so collectible. They look oversized and awkward in the tackle box. But, when they slice through the water, some of their grace does shine through.

Is there anyone among us who hasn't, at one time or another, decided to chuck it all and go fishing instead? *Reel Fish'n* can satisfy some of those urges with a short electronic vacation. Sometimes a quick hop down to the old fishing hole is just what you need to put the rest of the world in focus.

—Ross Chamberlain

Electronic Arts, 1810 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404; (415) 571-7171.

Life & Death

Software Toolworks

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Apple IIGS ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

Life & Death is another example of computer software as Fantasy Island. Just as flight simulators allow the computerist to take joy rides in supersonic jets and auto simulators permit users to take the world's most exotic and expensive sports cars out for a spin, *Life & Death* works around an even more compelling flight of fantasy: the computerist as surgeon.

Surgeons have been the gunslingers, the glory boys of the medical profession since World War II, when the sheer volume of bullet-riddled bodies on which to practice led to surgical innovations such as closed- and, eventually, open-heart surgery.

Life & Death lets the user don gloves, gown and mask to play the surgeon role to the limits of modern technology. The player attends medical school, visits patients, offers a diagnosis, runs tests and even takes scalpel in hand, when all else fails, for some cutting and strutting in the O.R.

Life & Death is not a perfect program: The tutorial quality that often surfaces requires the user to learn a lot more about cutting and stitching than they probably ever intended. The computerist must also perform a litany of pre-surgical procedures that suggests a fixation with pointless detail. Requiring the user to scrub the patient with a sterile wash, prepare the intravenous injections and even

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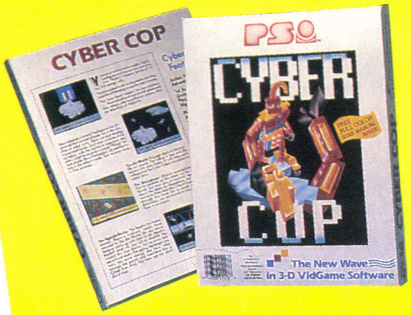

Cyber Cop takes 3-D Vidgame software to new heights in this exciting, fast-paced, arcade action adventure. You are the Law and the Rebels are ready for you. Will you survive? Find out now, at your local software retailer or order direct from PSI.

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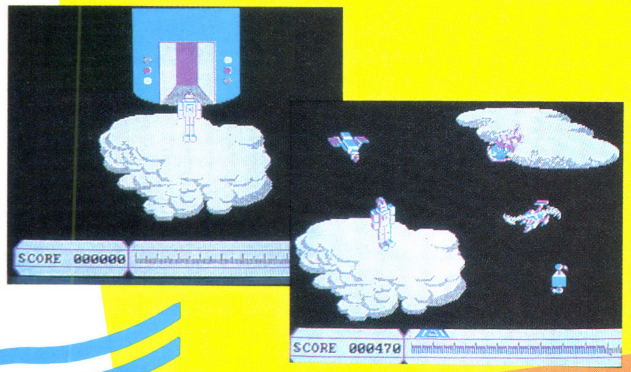

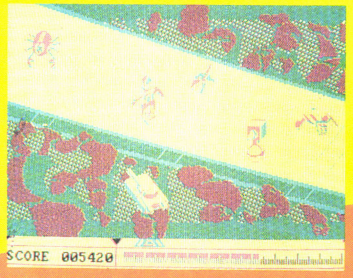

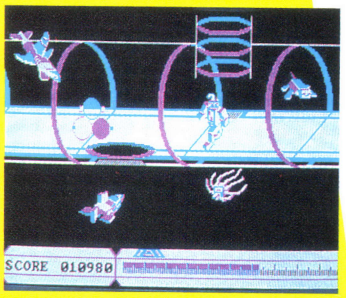

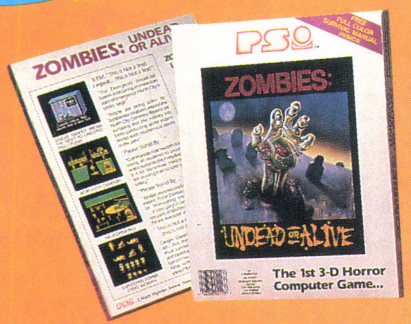

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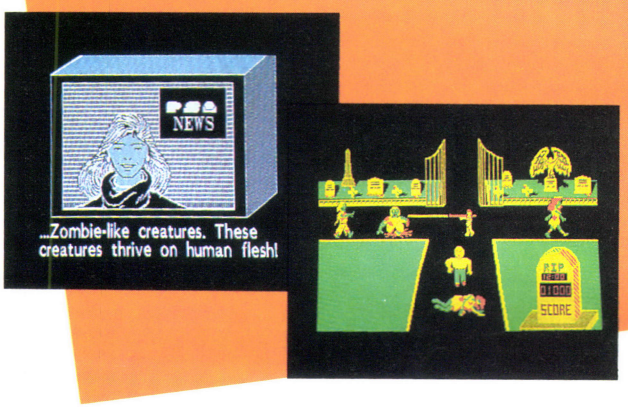

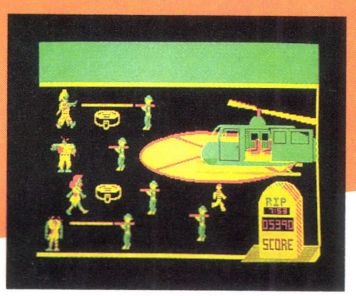

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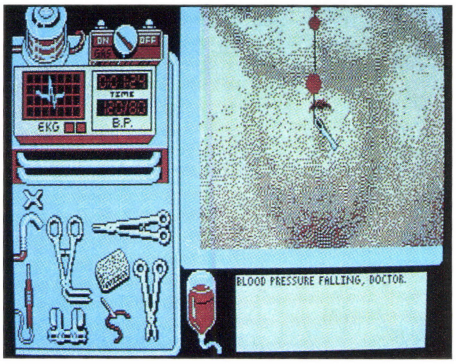
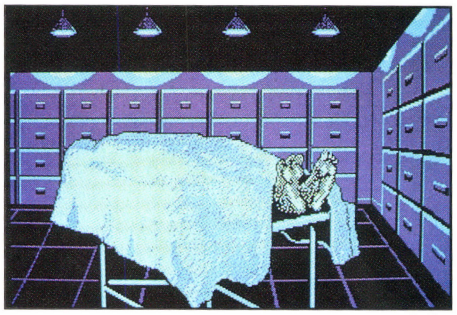
turn on the anesthesia is tantamount to having them hose down and gas up their fighter jet before taking off in a flight simulator. Perhaps the designers were terrified that users might want to play vivisectionist and were determined to curb such "inappropriate" use of the program by forcing the computerist to "study hard" before ever letting them pick up a scalpel. Even in the operating theater, all it takes is one mistake for the nurses to take away your instruments and send you back to medical school.

While it can be argued that using such a program for the kick of performing unrealistic experiments is in questionable taste, it should nonetheless be an option. If the player wishes to simply walk into the O.R. without washing up and start hacking away just to see what's inside a patient, it should be possible. Isn't the option to fail (without any *real* damage) what simulations are all about? Imagine a flight simulator where the copilot seized control of the aircraft every time the computerist made a mistake. It does make sense for the user to receive a complete post-operative performance evaluation, but the way *Life & Death* restrains the computerist detracts from the experience. As a result, it never communicates the sense of omnipotence, the literal power of life and death, that this simulation is theoretically about.



In a variation on the computer simulation, *Life & Death* gives the player an opportunity to play surgeon.



The last place you want your patient to end up is under a sheet in the morgue.

On the plus side, *Life & Death* uses a friendly interface, excellent graphics and many of the trappings of the medical experience to create an instructive and potentially valuable tool. The game works off a main-menu screen which includes an admitting desk, staff area, operating theater and several private rooms. The standard point-and-click play interface moves the user about the hospital to perform his or her daily rounds.

Life & Death is a high-concept program severely handicapped by a squeamishness that has no place in computer simulations. Nonetheless, its unique stature makes it a program worth investigating for anyone with an interest in the subject.

—Bill Kunkel

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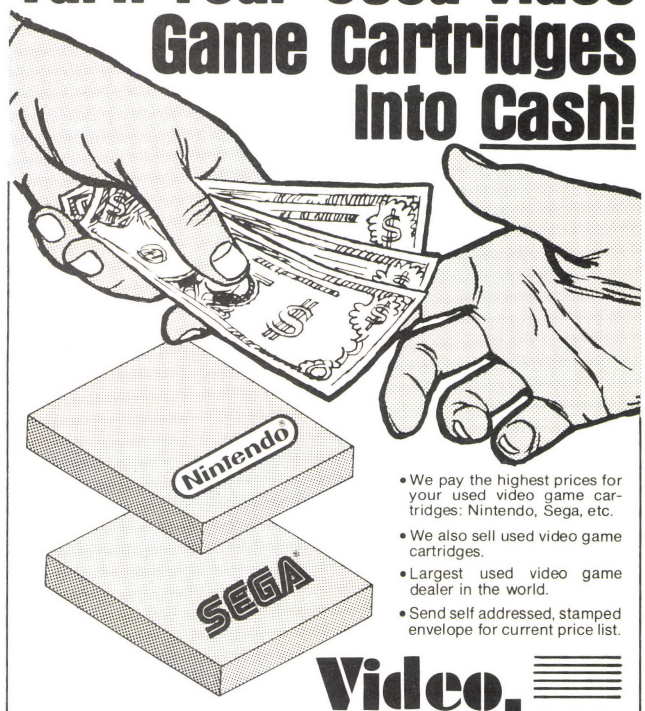

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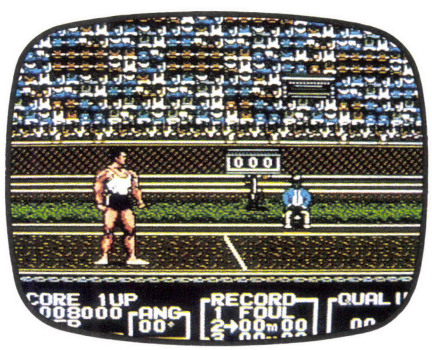

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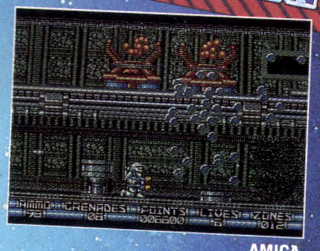

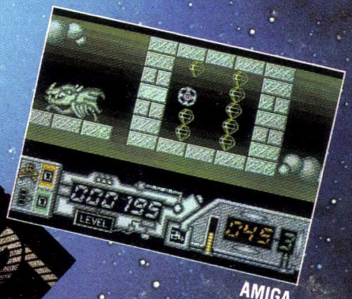

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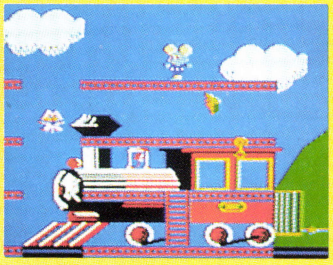

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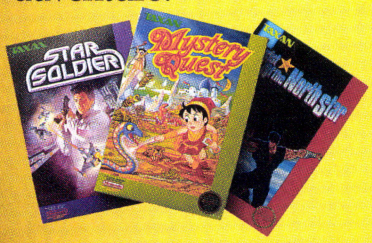

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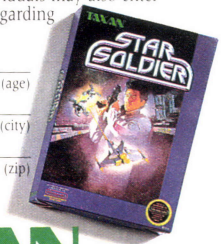

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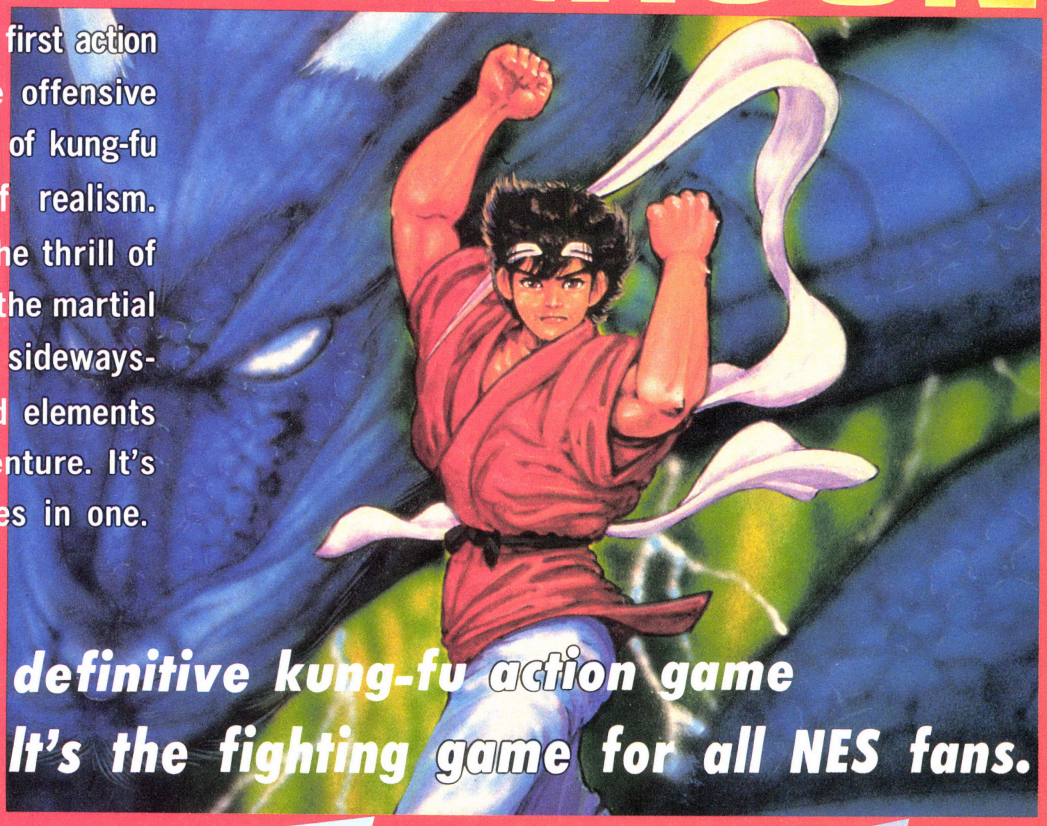

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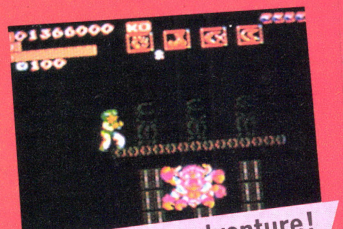

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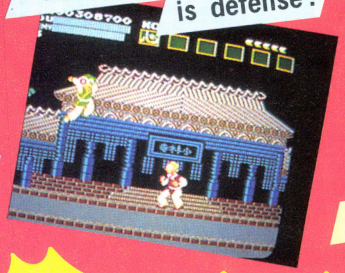

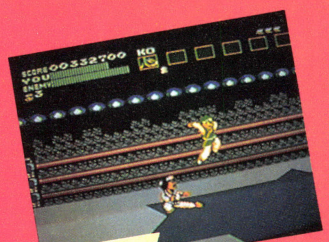

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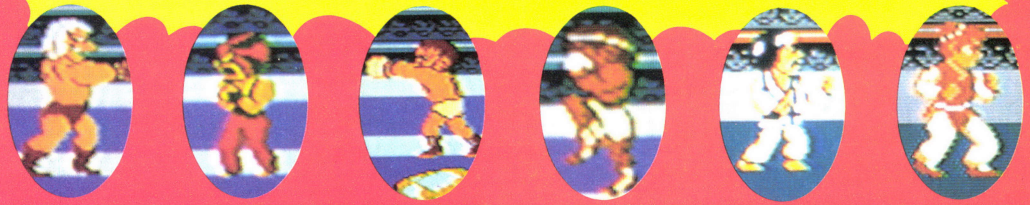

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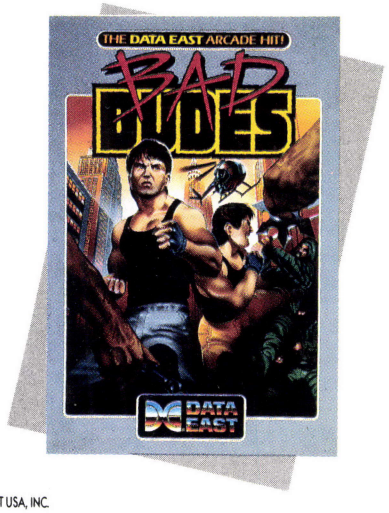

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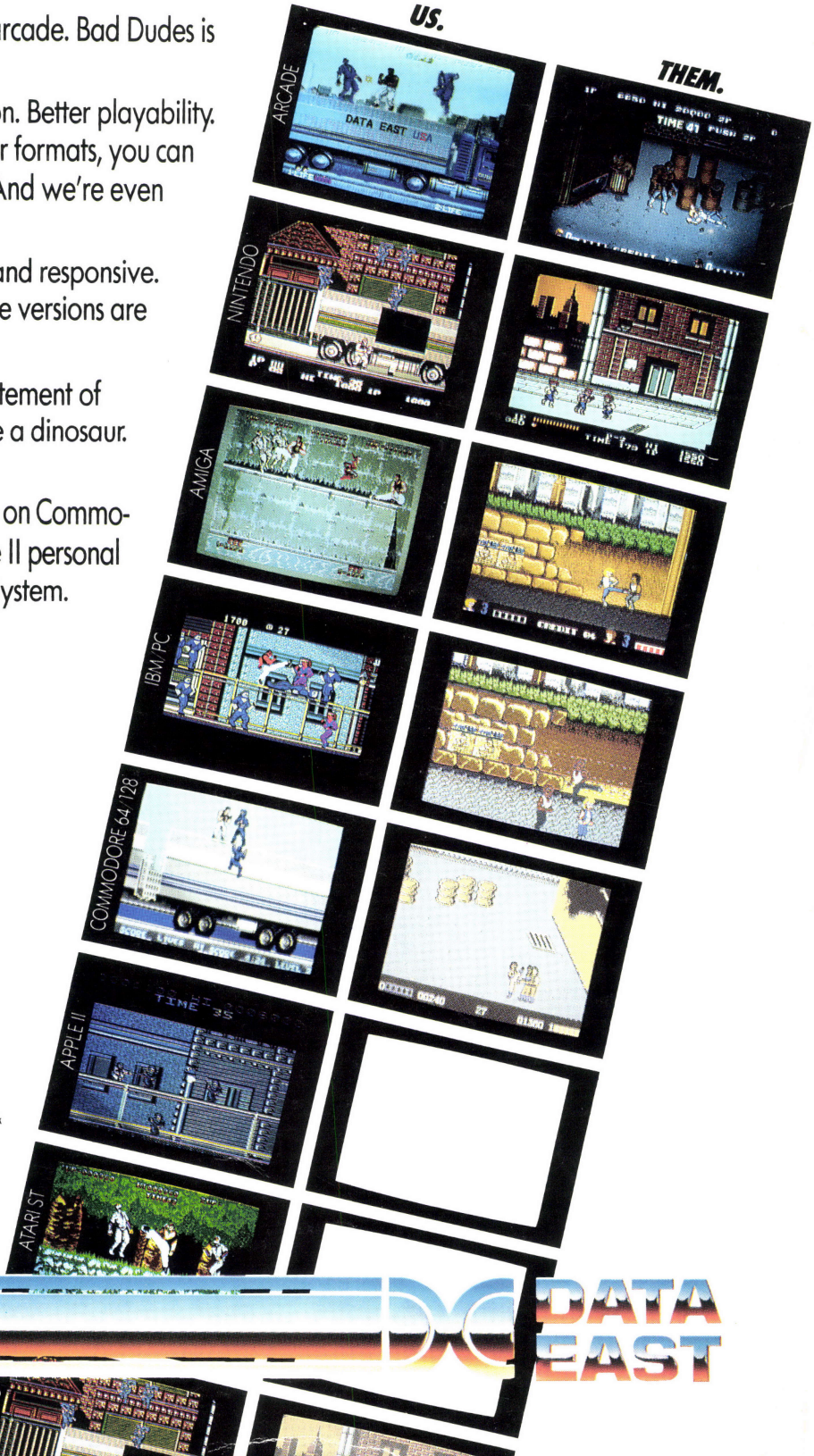

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